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THE
B I B L E - W O R K.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. III.

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st and 2d Samuel, 1 Chronicles
XI., 1 Kings I-XI., 2 Chronicles I-IX.

ISRAEL UNDER JOSHUA, THE JUDGES, SAUL, DAVID, AND SOLOMON.

THE REVISED TEXT, ARRANGED IN SECTIONS ; WITH COMMENTS SELECTED FROM THE CHOICEST,
MOST ILLUMINATING AND HELPFUL THOUGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN CENTURIES,
TAKEN FROM NEARLY THREE HUNDRED SCHOLARLY WRITERS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS AND DIAGRAMS.

PREPARED BY
J. GLENTWORTH BUTLER, D.D.



He remembered his holy promise ; and he brought forth his people with joy ;
And he gave them the lands of the heathen ; that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws.
They did not destroy the nations whom the LORD commanded them ; but were mingled among them ;
They learned their works ; and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them.
Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people ; and he gave them into the hand of the heathen.
Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry ; and he remembered for them his covenant,
And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.
O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever.

From Psalms 105 and 106.

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NOTE.—The considerable amount of text included in the scope of this volume constrains an occasional omission of chapters or parts of chapters; such, for example, as the minute detail of the subdivisions of the land, the protracted account of the Benjamite war, the catalogue of David's "mighty men," and the particulars of his ecclesiastical, military, and revenue "courses," and official lists. But in every case the substance of the omitted text is clearly indicated, and every point worthy of note has its appropriate comment.

ISRAEL UNDER JOSHUA AND JUDGES; UNDER SAUL, DAVID AND SOLOMON.

Section 200

PRELIMINARY: POINTS OF REMINDER AND OF CONNECTION WITH PREVIOUS HISTORY, AND OF SUGGESTION AND EXPLANATION TOUCHING THE HISTORY COVERED BY THIS VOLUME.

Truth is learned only at the pure fountains of evidence. Authority does not create it; dogmatism recommends it not; neither does violence impose it: from such task-masters conscience retreats, that she may hear in the still silence of her musings the voice of God. E. T. Filch.

Familiarize the Scripture to thyself by constant and methodical exercise therein. Order, as it is the mother of memory, so is it a singular friend to a clear understanding. The generality of the Scripture hath such a contexture and coherence, one part with another, that small insight into it will be gained by reading it confusedly, disorderly; therefore read the whole in Order. Dr. Francis Roberts (1665).

WE call the Scriptures a revelation; in other words, *an unveiling*. The Bible records were given to us to take away the veil which hung between heaven and earth, between man and God. Their purpose is to reveal God. The actual revelation which has been made to us is of God in His relation to the soul of man. We are not to demand, we are not to expect, any further revelation. Of the secrets of God's power and origin we are told not a word. Such knowledge is not for us. But it does concern us to know of God's moral nature—to know that He is all-powerful, all-good, all-loving; and of God's power, goodness, and love, the Bible is one long and continuous revelation. The self-declared object of the Scriptures is that men should know God and know themselves. *Ainger.*

Two things distinguish the Bible from every other book: the view it gives us of man, and the view it gives us of God. The one is so human,

the other so Divine; the one so exactly consistent with what we ourselves see of man, the other so exactly consistent with what we ourselves should expect in God,—in other words, with what our own conscience, which is God's voice within, recognizes as worthy of God, and ratifies where it could not have originated. *Vaughan.*

Grandly the old text harmonizes with the new—the old is illuminated by the new and the new is connected with the old as part of one sublime system, animated by one spirit, originated by one mind, and unitedly filling up the circle of truth for the salvation of men. Reading the Old Testament in the light of the New, we are not passing into another atmosphere or another region of thought; it is the same; the same God, the same Saviour in prophecy, the same Christian life and experience. Reading the New, we see in it only a fulfilment of the Old; the same system more fully developed; the same truth set forth in clear light. Thus this whole Bible comes to the heart as the living Word of God, all of it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, for edification in righteousness. *S. W. F.*

The Old and the New Testament are one. They have one aim; they treat of one revelation; they disclose one way of salvation. They fit in together as perfectly as two sundered fragments of a branch would fit together, with an undesigned exactness that no human art could imitate. The Old Testament must be read in the light of the New, and the New Testament cannot be understood except in the light of the Old. As our Lord himself said, the Old Testament testifies of him all the way through. Christ

is its main underlying thought, and no one knows how to read the Old Testament who does not look for Christ everywhere in it. *Crosby.*

Jesus Christ would not have accepted a homage which would have exalted Him at the expense of the God of the Old Covenant, a homage which would have placed His words in contradiction of spirit and tendency with those of Moses and the prophets, or which would relegate miracles far back into the dimness of the ancient ages, to eliminate them from His own life and work. All the lines of the Old Testament, law, prophecy, history, converge toward Jesus Christ. Jesus fulfils it in every respect. To break with the one, therefore, is to break of necessity with the other. And if the Old Testament should be banished from the shelves of our libraries, and from the hands of our children, the New would not fail soon to follow it. And by what would it be replaced? Are the literary geniuses of modern times likely to stand the future generations in lieu of psalter and prophets? They do not, perhaps, express themselves as crudely as the Bible does. But this is what they do. They skilfully excite the imagination by half-veiled pictures, which inspire a taste for guilty pleasures. And what society is that which they labor at forming? A society of which some one has said that "its ears alone are chaste." No doubt the hand of the Bible is rude; it rends all manner of veils, it calls things by their name. It is disgusting, men say. True, and that is precisely the reason why the Bible disgusts us with evil. Compare the populations that possess the Bible with those that are deprived of it. See England, —see America. The holiness of God has found its way into the conscience of those nations. The Bible is in every hand. The pure, frank, energetic glance of the maiden herself would be sufficient to attest that if she does know evil this knowledge has left in her heart no trace whatever of sympathy, for she has learned to consider it in the light of holiness. That is what the Bible does.

Goethe thus expresses his opinion of the Bible:—"It is to its intrinsic value that the Bible owes the extraordinary veneration in which it is held by so many nations and generations. It is not only a popular book, it is the book of the people. The greater the intellectual progress of ages, the more fully possible will it also become to employ the Bible both as the foundation and as the instrument of education—of that education by which not pedants, but truly wise men are formed. Take the Bible, book after book, and you will find that this Book of books has been given us in order that, in contact with it,

as with a new world, we may study, enlighten, and develop ourselves." "When," says he, in speaking of his youth, "my imagination, ever active, bore me away, now hither, now thither, and when all this blending of history and fable, of mythology and religion, threatened to unsettle my mind, gladly then did I flee toward those Eastern countries; I buried myself in the first books of Moses, and there, amidst those wandering tribes, I found myself at once in the grandest of solitudes and in the grandest of societies." Such is the judgment of one of the most eminent of modern writers, of a man whom no particular religious sympathy led to the Bible. This appreciation was the result of his moral conscience, of his literary taste, and of his common sense. *Godet.*

The *history* of the Israelitish people, as recorded in the Old Testament, needs now more than ever to be made familiar, not only as exhibiting the divine guidance of a chosen race, with the constant revelation of the character and will of God which it involves, and also as containing the *setting* in which prophecy is put and exhibiting the relations in which it was uttered, but as furnishing the means of judging of the validity of many objections which have been recently urged. The best refutation of not a few of the strange and distorted representations of sacred history now persistently made, is the history itself. *Day.*

The historic books of the Old Testament are a part of revealed religion, but it is because they are the record of that revelation of the mind and the will of God which is unfolded to us in the life of nations and the course of history. The Spirit of God is instructing us in the sacred narrative concerning the principles of the Divine government, the inherent might of right, the irresistible prevalence in the long run of good over evil, the tendency of selfishness and wrong to sap the vitality and undermine the fair prosperity and strength of nations and the like; but these are principles which are not simply contained and taught for the first time in the pages of a book, they are interwoven into the life of humanity. *Caird.*

The leading purpose of the Old Testament Records is to recount the origin of God's covenant with men, and the gradual development of a kingdom among men upon the basis of that covenant. These Records impressively disclose the principles of the Divine administration, *i.e.*, the laws governing the subjects of this kingdom, and the methods of Divine acceptance and

favor, as conveyed through specific moral commandments, through the temporary aid of ceremonial and type, through prophecy, and, *not least, through national and personal history*. In this view of the Old Testament histories we find their inestimable value. Covering a wide reach of time, and including a vast range of circumstance and incident, they furnish abundant opportunity to illustrate God's method of acting; they unfold fully the great principles of His law and grace, by their minute application of these principles to varying events, and to differing human characters and conduct. In this view, as replete with suggested counsel, encouragement, and warning, for the practical questions of life, a thoughtful pulpit teacher recently characterized these inspired Histories as "the Gospel of Providence;" and justly, since Providence is an integral and vital part of God's gracious administration. And in this view, let it be remembered, the worth and usefulness of this Old Testament Gospel are scarcely second to that of the New, of which it is the needful complement. B.

One marked feature pervades the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not that *history is made the medium of religious instruction*. That would be a most narrow and mistaken view of the matter. It is that religion is shown as the soul of history; the supreme reality and central power in human affairs; the deepest foundation of human life. *E. R. Conder*.—The Old Testament histories do not contain history as such, but a *selection of historical facts* made in accordance with a determinate philosophy of history. It was the privilege of the chosen people to be conscious from the first of the purport of their national vicissitudes, and to believe in a Providence who not only held all the threads which made up the patterns of their life, but who had also revealed to them the general features of that pattern. The words of the original covenant made amid flame and trumpet and lightning, had been frequently reiterated. They knew that national misfortune indicated national *wrong-doing*, and national prosperity a national obedience to the divine commands. *Cave*.

The Old Testament differs from ordinary histories in its *subject*, because it is the history of the special training and discipline of God's chosen people: in its *method*, because it is "a history of facts as God sees them referred to their true centre in Him, explained by His dealings with men, and His workings within them;" or, in other words, its writers were inspired by God the Holy Ghost to discern the true significance of events, and to relate such parts of the

national history as should truly set forth the gradual evolution of God's purpose toward His people. The Old Testament is the history of a dispensation which was partial, progressive, preparatory. It can only be rightly understood in view of the great fact to which it looked forward. It must be studied as the record of the Divine Preparation for the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is the central event of the world's history, the hope of all humanity, the final revelation of God to the world. "It does not simply *contain* prophecies of Christ: it is from first to last a prophecy of Him." This preparation included three main elements which must be carefully traced in each successive epoch of Jewish history: (1) the discipline and training of the chosen nation of Israel that it might be "the home" to which in "the fulness of the times" God might send His Son; and the instrument by which the knowledge of God might be communicated to the world at large: (2) the gradual development under the various types of Priest, Prophet, and King, of the expectation of a Deliverer who should unite in himself all these offices, and be at once a Mediator, a Teacher, a Monarch: (3) God's progressive revelation of Himself, "in many parts and in many fashions," that men might at length be enabled to recognize "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." A. F. K.

The Hebrew historians wrote straight to the heart and conscience. Remember God and righteousness, is the moral of their every page. They never wrote history for mere history's sake, nor biography for biography's sake. They wrote national history, for they had a great mission to the national mind and heart; but they wrote their national history largely in biographical guise, for they had at least as great a mission to the individual heart, and sought their effects through the wide gate of personal sympathies. They wrote to the whole nation; and at the same time they wrote to each individual soul. *Cable*.

The God of the Hebrew Scriptures is a being who loves, with an infinite and divine love, truth and righteousness, and who hates with the intensity of a being who is holy, all iniquity. And it is this personality of God, which is so vividly revealed to us in the Old Testament, that imparts to that book its peculiar charm and interest. We feel silenced and awed in the presence of the existence and personality of such a God. The history of Israel becomes in our sight profoundly interesting. It becomes a wonderfully

real history. The scenes which the Old Testament present to us for our study and profit are all aglow with the vividness, picturesqueness, and brilliancy of great events wherein we see, as though portrayed in massive outlines, and in splendor and richness and strength of coloring, the tumultuous warring, disloyal, and sinning life of nations and individuals. We see, in these narratives in the Old Testament, the flashing armor of hosts tramping to battle, the gleam of swords and spears on crimson fields and mountains, the stately and splendid procession of kings and armies,—scenes of war and peace, sorrow and joy, glorious reward and terrible punishment. And from amid these scenes, so intensely graphic in their nature, there rises in majesty, limitless power, mercy and holiness, Jehovah of hosts, the God of heaven and earth, the rewarder of those who love and diligently seek him, and the punisher of those who disobey him. If there is one single truth which these striking scenes impress upon our minds, it is the great and solemn truth that there is a personal God in the heavens, and that his eyelids try the children of men. *S. A. Harlow.*

Moses taught his countrymen that God *had* conferred upon them the highest prize which man can conceive, freely and without any merit on their part. When they were bondsmen of Pharaoh, He claimed them as His servants; when they trembled before the powers of the visible world, He showed them that these powers were His instruments, and that He used them for their good; when they fancied that the Ruler of the world was indifferent to them or hated them, He proved that He was watching over them and caring for them, even in their meanest condition, though they were not thinking at all of Him; when they supposed that He was capricious, He proved to them the evenness, regularity, equity of His government; when they fancied that He was unmerciful, He declared Himself as the Lord God, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. This knowledge of the living and unseen God, Moses told his countrymen, was everything. This knowledge was *the* good thing which they had received from the Source of all Good. To hold it fast, was to be a nation; to lose it, was to sink back into the condition out of which they had been raised—not by their own might,—and which if they trusted in their own might, would assuredly overtake them again. *Maurice.*

And so all through, this history places in bold contrast God's much love and Israel's little love, his faithfulness and their "little faith," his constancy and their fickleness, his holiness and

their vileness, their provocations and his long-suffering. And yet he upbraids not. He speaks in righteousness, which is as necessary to their blessedness as is the love itself. Such is the God with whom we have to do. He will maintain equally and always righteousness that cannot be tainted, faithfulness that cannot fail, and love which cannot be quenched. Happy are we, who, knowing that our salvation through the blood is an accomplished fact, and that our acceptance "in the Beloved" is eternally secured, can welcome the living and powerful word, in its dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and its discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart. *An.*

Thus we learn the value of the Old Testament histories in illustrating God's method of acting, in unfolding the great principles of His law and grace by minute applications to persons and events; that is, their value as revealing the character and heart of God, through these particulars of His working. But not less valuable are these Old Testament histories in the superior means they afford for the calm study and accurate comprehension of human character and conduct. Our own observation, or even experience, is necessarily imperfect and partial, so that we cannot certainly discern *motive* as acting in others or ourselves. Our inferences respecting men are therefore defective. But these Bible narratives reveal motive, and open men's hearts to our view; we can study men dispassionately, and with less liability to mistake. Above all, we can better understand the force and the depth of man's corruptness. So it is that the Old Testament histories not only disclose God's nature, but, better than any other histories, reveal man's mixed character. On the one side they unveil his natural selfishness in all its deformity and enormity; and on the other, his received spiritual temper in its beauty and excellence, even though imperfect. And this twofold revelation, of God and man, they make in connection with the wide range of varied circumstance and incident, in which God and man act together. *B.*

Paul, 1 Cor. 10:1-14, shows us the proper use of this history. It teaches us the corruption, perverseness, and folly of man, and the goodness and severity of God. It shows us the evil of unbelief and of rebellion; the excellence of submission to the divine will; and the truth, power, and unchangeableness of Jehovah. This part of Scripture discloses a true picture of human life; of our dangers and difficulties in the world. What lessons ought we to learn here of vigilance and caution; of patience, fidelity, and

courage! and what warnings against unbelief and disobedience! *Jos. Jones.*

We can use the Bible with deeper interest because of the intensely human character of its narratives. We see human life in its pages, and trace human idiosyncracies in the varieties of representation, and as "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," so this human element in the Bible lays hold of men, and excites in them a greater interest in its narratives. The careful reader also, by means of these variations, *sees in stronger light the one spiritual purpose running through the whole.* The great revelation of God in Christ is more conspicuous in its oneness and continuity by reason of the very diversities and sometimes irreconcilable differences of the narrative. Our appreciation of the spiritual is the higher because we see that not one great truth is in the slightest degree affected by any verbal, chronological, or historical difficulties. Admit them all, if need be, and the real saving truth is as clear as the sun at noonday. *The difficulties in question are a means of wholesome discipline.* All historic studies furnish scope for the exercise of caution, discrimination, patience, reticence, and suspended judgment because of the necessary incompleteness of all historic records. This is especially true of the Bible, the more so as we do not always know the particular reason of the selection or omission of items, while we do know that we have not a thousandth part of the actual events associated with the unfolding in the long line of human history of the great purpose of God in Christ. The light thrown on obscure passages by advancing discoveries is an additional reason for the exercise of patience and cautious reserve. God is educating us in the peculiar manner in which he has been pleased to allow his revelation to man to be incorporated by human hands with narratives of events. *C. Chapman.*

The Old Testament Scripture combines two forms of history—annals, and dramatic story. Annals are short, and necessarily somewhat dry; but they have the advantage of embracing much in comparatively short compass. The dramatic story is necessarily diffuse; it occupies a large amount of space; but it has the advantage of presenting a living picture—of bringing past events before the reader as they happened at the time. If the whole history of the Bible had been in the form of annals, it would have been very useful, but it would have wanted human interest. If it had been all in the dramatic form, it would have occupied too much space.

By the combination of the two methods, we secure the compact precision of the one, and the living interest of the other. *W. G. B.*

The prominent characteristics of the biblical style in the historical books, are simplicity and dignity. We often find repetition: but yet the sacred narratives are rapid and concise: they are chiefly outlines or sketches of character, of interesting incidents, abounding with noble expressions, deep thoughts, and exquisite touches. "The whole of Scripture history" (says Gerard) "is carried on in a dramatic manner, introducing persons as speaking and conferring; which has great simplicity, and a great effect in expressing sentiments, suited to particular characters, whether good or bad." The biblical style, as compared with the classic, may be called sententious. The Scripture history is, in fact, a peculiar sort of writing, partly biography, partly annals. It presents us with a series of historical pictures, both domestic and national. Events are recorded; but they always stand connected with moral elements and attributes. Here, in short, we see the ways of God in his providence and moral government; and here we see the ways of man. Almost every page leads us to examine a moral picture—a human being. The language is simple, natural, terse, select: the sentences are generally short. *Jos. Jones.*

Literary Study Auxiliary to the Religious Use of the Bible.

The purpose of the Bible is practical and religious. Its great central thoughts relate to God and man—the nature, love, and purposes of God, and the duty and true destiny of man. The Bible, which treats chiefly of the relations of man to God, is therefore pre-eminently the book of duty. It teaches men what God requires of them and makes possible for them. It opens to mankind the meaning of their own life. Disclosing God's thoughts for man, it teaches the dignity of human life, and enables men to discover and receive as their own the divine conception of what they should do and be. The Bible is the book of life. It is comparatively oblivious of all subjects except salvation, character, goodness. Its great lessons and truths relate to what God has done and is ever doing to save men to their best possible selves. Its chief emphasis, therefore, is always upon righteousness, an inner life of harmony with God and of growing likeness in all that is God-like. But all these great truths are set in a historic frame-work. They are, in the main, not in abstract but in concrete form. They are woven into the warp and woof of history, illustrated

and enforced in the lives of individuals, communities, and nations. They run as pervading lessons through the careers of men and peoples; they are bound up in images and similitudes, in types and symbols; they are found in letters and sermons; some of their tenderest tones breathe through poems and prayers. Thus the Bible presents to the student of it all the chief types of literary form. It must, to some extent, be studied as literature, with literary appreciation and with reference to its literary phenomena and peculiarities, if it is to be intelligently as well as devoutly studied.

The religious use and the literary study of the Bible are in no way inconsistent; each should be and may be made very helpful to the other. The religious character and value of the Bible should make its literary study more earnest and reverent, while an appreciation of the Bible as history and literature will more fully disclose its meaning and emphasize its value. As religion must be both intelligent and devout if it will produce the best results in character; so biblical study, which is so vitally related to religion, should both appreciate and reverently receive the spiritual truth of the Bible, and also seek to understand the forms in which it is presented, and the providential conditions and circumstances under which those truths have been revealed and the historic agencies which have been employed to this end. If these two methods of Bible study do not react helpfully upon one another, it can only be because, on the one hand, reverence for the Bible is blind and superstitious, or because, on the other, the literary study of it is cold and unappreciative. It will be a great gain to the cause of theology and religion when the Bible is more studied and understood as literature. In this way, truer conceptions of what the Bible is will come to prevail. When the historical relations and literary forms with which its truths and teachings are inseparably connected are better appreciated, its true meaning and value will be more apparent, interpretations which defy philology and history alike will be less frequent and persistent, and the possibility of a far better agreement among Christians respecting the essentials of faith will be attained. *Stevens.*

Doctrinal Teaching of the Old Testament.

In the Bible, doctrine simply means teaching, whether of abstract truths, or of the practical obligations of life. It is delivered by the sacred writers variously and informally by means of narrative, poetry, and exhortation. An excellent way of studying and connecting together

religious doctrines is that of a Biblical Theology, conducted on the true historico-critical method which must approve itself to an age so intent as ours on the accurate exegesis of Scripture, and so deeply interested in tracing the historical developments of thought and faith among the nations of the world. A really Biblical Theology, while far from despising the ancient creeds or the modern logical systems, endeavors to follow the path of actual revelation, and to trace the advancing development of truth along the lines of dispensational progress. It is the way which brings out most fully to view the manifold wisdom of God, and in the end gives the most satisfaction to our intelligence, and the most firmness to our belief. The lines of study must of course begin in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. We refuse to regard these as a mere literature of Judaism. In fact, Judaism, properly so called, began only in the days of Ezra, and as the canon of the Old Testament was about to close. That venerable canon is no special production or property of Judaism, but a record, through the prophets and historians of Israel, of divine revelation in all pre-Christian times. Therefore, an insight into its teachings and forecastings of things to come is indispensable to an intelligent apprehension of the later revelation enshrined in the Scriptures of the New Covenant.

The teaching of the Old Testament is the historical foundation of the New Testament doctrine. The Old Testament, as a whole, underlies and supports the New. It not only gives the historical antecedents, but it trains and leads up to the New Testament, and determines the mould of thought. It does not follow from this that sentences and clauses may be extracted from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and strung together in any order, as proof-texts of Christian tenets; for this would be to ignore that progress in revelation which the Bible itself clearly and candidly avows. It is enough to find the rich germs of Christian truth in the Old Testament. If one asks for more, and insists on reading mature doctrine in the earliest books of the Bible, either he must have recourse to incessant allegorical interpretation, or he insensibly limits New Testament thought by Old Testament conditions. It is most true that through all Scripture there is one God, one purpose of mercy to mankind, one and the same principle of salvation by grace; but it by no means follows that all who have been saved, from the most remote ages, had a knowledge of the personal Saviour. It was a good saying of the late Dr. John Duncan, "We must not un-

saint the Old Testament saints, but we must not make Pentecostal Christians of them." *Hanna*. —Nothing could be more fatal to the proper understanding of Holy Scripture, or of the purposes of God in His dealings with His ancient people, than to transport into olden times the full spiritual privileges, the knowledge of Divine truth, or even that of right and duty, which we now enjoy. It is not to do honor, but dishonor, to the Spirit of God to overlook the educational process of gradual development, which is not only a necessity of our nature, but explains our history. A miracle of might could, indeed, have placed the age of Samuel on the same spiritual level with that of the New Testament, at least so far as regards the communication of the same measure of truth. But such an exhibition of power would have eliminated the *moral element* in the *educational* progress of Israel, with the discipline of wisdom, mercy, and truth which it implied, and, indeed, have rendered the whole Old Testament history needless. A. E.

Four Characteristics of Old Testament Teaching.

1. *It rests always on facts and events.* Nothing is argued or deduced from abstract principles. God moves toward men, deals with them, governs them; and all the teaching centres in and issues from transactions of God with men, and of men with God. The question, whether the accounts given of meetings and communications between God and man are historically true, or in some cases at all events devout legends, is a separate question to be discussed on its own grounds of evidence. But this at least is indisputable and reveals a profound wisdom, that the religious teaching grows upon a stem of narrative; the doctrine is not delivered in formulated propositions, but is involved in a record of what were, or profess to have been, actual doings and events.

2. *It is so conducted as to be strongly suggestive of better things to come.* The large scope given to prediction; the copious use of analogies and symbols evidently charged with a higher meaning than could be plainly stated at the time; the encouragement of hopes greater than the best periods of ancient history ever realized—all look toward a New Testament, and a time when things may be known and enjoyed, which prophets and righteous men desired to see, but were not permitted.

3. While this is the aspect of the Old Testament as a whole, *its doctrine has within its own limits continual amplification and progress.* Some momentous truths are there from the outset; but the materials of knowledge, the grounds of

faith, and the indications of divine character and will multiply and strengthen as we advance. The theology is developed as the purposes of God are unfolded, and the order of His providence is revealed. The simplicity of the Patriarchal time grows into the minutely preceptive period of the Law. New elements of thought and hope come in with the Kingdom. Then there is an enlargement of the devout conceptions, as well as an intensifying of devout feelings, by help of the Psalter. And still further there is a powerful inculcation of the mind and will of Jehovah through the prophets of Judah and Israel. In fact, it is almost as necessary to observe the progress from the earlier to the later books of the Old Testament, as to recognize the advance from these last to the earlier books of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. *The teaching of the Old Testament is not superseded in the New, but crowned and perfected.* Standing in New Testament light, with the help of the Holy Ghost, we are to look along the whole track of Old Testament history, prophecy, and song, and mark the footsteps of the coming Christ all along the way. The Scriptures of the old time are "able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus;" not otherwise. For lack of such faith, Jews reading those Scriptures of their own nation are blind and spiritually unwise. But the New Testament key opens to us the Old Testament casket of truth. With faith in Christ Jesus we acquire wisdom in the garden of innocence, in the ark of deliverance, in the tents of patriarchs, in the wilderness with Moses and the tribes, in the camp with Joshua, in the court of David, in the temple of Solomon, in the society of the poets and prophets in whom God breathed. "For all Scripture theopneustic is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, fully furnished for every good work." D. F.

FACTS IMPRESSED BY THE STUDY OF EARLY OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

First, the difference between the subjective and objective aspects of its theology.

However low, comparatively speaking, may have been the stage occupied by Israel in their conceptions of, and dealings with God, yet the manifestations of the Divine Being are always so sublime that we could not conceive them higher at any later period. As we read their account we are still as much overawed and solemnized as they who had witnessed them. In fact, their sublimeness increases in proportion as the human element, and consequently the Divine

accommodation to it, recedes. *Secondly*, even as regards man's bearing toward the Lord, the Old Testament never presents what seems the fundamental character of all ancient heathen religions. The object of Israel's worship and services was never to *deprecate*, but to *pray*. There was no malignant deity or fate to be averted, but a Father who claimed love and a King who required allegiance. *Lastly*, there is never an exhibition of mere power on the part of the Deity, but always a moral purpose conveyed by it, which in turn is intended to serve as germ of further spiritual development to the people. We are too prone to miss this moral purpose, because it is often conveyed in a form adapted to the standpoint of the men of that time, and hence differs from that suited to our own.

Certain special difficulties in this part of the history concern the substance more than the form or letter of the text, and raise doctrinal, philosophical, and moral, rather than critical and exegetical questions. . . . I can at least say, that my own reverent belief in the authority of the Word of God has not in any one case been the least shaken. It sounds almost presumptuous to write down such a confession. Yet it seems called for in days when the enumeration of difficulties, easily raised, owing to the distance of these events, the great difference of circumstances, and the necessary scantiness of our materials of knowledge—whether critical, historical, or theological—so often takes the place of sober inquiry; and high-sounding phrases which, logically tested, yield no real meaning, are substituted for solid reasoning. A. E.

Neither in doctrine nor in morals did the ancients reach what we call the Christian standard. We do not admit that a divine sanction ever was given to immorality or cruelty; but, apart from this, we deny that Christianity is bound to answer for the standard of conduct recognized even by God-fearing men before the day of Christ. The Old Testament conducts to Christianity; but the greater part of it is pre-Christian and immature. Its ethical teaching is all conducted on the principle of delineating the steps of progress by which the holy God has been pleased to guide and elevate the *moral* as well as theological education of mankind. *Hanna*.

GOD'S PURPOSES IN ESTABLISHING THE ISRAELITISH NATION AND POLITY.

In the age of the world, and among those people when and to whom the commandments were delivered, false worship, or the worship of false

gods, was the sin which lay at the root and foundation of every other. The worship of the one true God, in opposition to the vain, and false, and wicked religions which then obtained among mankind, was the grand point to be inculcated. History testifies, experience testifies, that there cannot be true morality, or true virtue, where there is false religion, false worship, false gods. Nay more; from the whole strain and tenor of the Old Testament there is good reason to believe, that to maintain in the world the knowledge and worship of the one true God, holy, just, and good, in contradistinction to the idolatrous worship which prevailed, was the great and principal scheme and end of the Jewish polity and most singular constitution. The Jewish nation was to be the depository of, and the means of preserving in the world the knowledge and worship of the one true God, when it was lost and darkened in other countries. *Paley*.

The great problem was how to stop the race from going any further wrong, into stark savagery and idolatry, and how to turn it about, and get it ready for the setting up of a Divine order upon it, and for the reconciling and renovating of it with the heavenly communion it had lost. This was the thing to be done. And it was to be done, suppose, not by the thrusting in of an arbitrary revolution, a stupendous miracle of mechanism which would simply set the outward works all right, but would leave the springs of spiritual life—love, choice, energy, faith—all untouched and unchanged. The very thing wanted was to bring in and set up these grand interior holy forces in the soul. "The world by wisdom knew not God." God only could make it know Him; and, being what He is, He could do it only by preserving man's freedom, and respecting every law wrought into his nature. He took, therefore, what we call the practical way; He used the principles of selection, concentration, and adaptation. He did it gradually. He did it by human instruments. He limited the scene and the numbers. He took the child Moses out of the rush-basket, bearing in his veins the finer blood of that Hebrew pastoral people that God had led with His own hand and voice before, over the hills and pastures of Mesopotamia and Canaan,—the most reverent and conscientious on the earth. He trained that child in the best scientific school of the time,—“in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” and then He set him at the head of a commonwealth. He selected a priesthood. He made elders. He organized a State. He arranged a ritual. He chose a limited territory in the right spot. And then He put this crude

and childish nation down,—not in liberty yet,—they were not ripe for that,—but under discipline and regulation ; not in the Gospel yet—for they would abuse and waste it if they had it,—but in the Law. This was the school and the scholar. In a word God did,—only better and more gloriously, and with some sublime signals of miraculous justice and mercy breaking through all along to turn to it the eyes of mankind and the reverent memory of the generations forever,—just what wisdom must do. He chose out one nation, and sent it to school to learn the prophetic rudiments of Christianity and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The Old Testament is simply the narrative of that training school for Christ and for men. Some parts are more obscure than others ; for the time was a great way back, and the materials of knowledge were scanty, and, above all, the Infinite and Inscrutable One, whose ways are often past our finding out, was the Master. But this is the key to the scheme. Was not the plan magnificent ? Can the best critic or the shrewdest objector suggest a wiser way to save and lift to heavenly places enervated, sensual, vulgar, wretched humanity ? And when we take a view of the whole Old Testament history wide and deep and rational as this,—with all its strange incidents, its erring heroes, and faulty saints, intermingled with its splendid virtues, its sublime loyalty, its eloquence and poetry unequalled in all the literature of the world, and its supernatural prophecies,—all intense and bright with hallowed fire, because it is the school of God,—is it not a very poor thing indeed to carp at an unexplained passage here and there, or to sneer and cavil at some half-veiled feature in the majestic working out of the design ? F. D. H.

To intrust the forthcoming revelation to the world at large would have been to lose it ; to secure its conservation the Most High prepared a place and a people. That revelation should be guarded with religious care by a race who knew that their national existence was bound up with its integrity, and who, instead of courting foreign alliances or aspiring to imperial dominion, felt that they had a mission still more august, that, as custodiers of God's oracles and guardians of His temple, they had a distinction above all the peoples that dwell on the face of the earth. Hence everything was done to keep them at home, and to keep them separate. Hence was it that a dietary was prescribed which made the Hebrew a troublesome guest and an uneasy traveller in the land of the Gentiles. Hence was it that a few days' radius from the Temple became the necessary limit of Hebrew

homes. Hence was it that the heart of the Jew was taught to cling with a tremendous tenacity to his Holy Land, till exile became the sorest of judgments, and a grave in the sacred soil was deemed almost essential to a joyful resurrection. *Hamilton.*

The lesson of the history as a whole should not be overlooked. What conceivable explanation is there of the history of the Jews, with their inextinguishable vitality, and the fulfilment again and again of their unquenchable hopes, except the truth that God had chosen them, and that God was with them ? They had no righteousness, but were a stiff-necked people. They had no splendid territory, but a strip of barren, narrow, ill-watered land. They had no grand genealogy—a Syrian ready to perish was their father. They were not powerful enough of themselves even to conquer their own small land. They were not united ; Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim. They were not free, but became the prey of nation after nation. They were not a maritime people, for their strip of seacoast was mostly harborless, and not their own. They had no commercial industry like Venice or Holland ; no art like Greece ; no arms like Rome ; no colonies like England ; no philosophy like Germany. They were constantly starting aside like a broken bow. Yet no power has ever been able to crush, no persecution to destroy them. They have influenced, taught, pervaded mankind. Their sacred book is the sacred book of humanity, their religious ideas are becoming more and more the religious ideas of the race. What explains it all, and alone explains it ? Nothing but the truth that " God showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances with Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, neither have the heathen knowledge of his law." *Farrar.*

Prophetical Character of Old Testament History.

We must carefully bear in mind, in reading the Old Testament, that the whole of the history of God's chosen people had a distinctly prophetical character, looking onward and leading up to the grand consummation of God's purposes for mankind in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and the foundation of his Church—the true spiritual Israel. We are not to look in them for a continuous history, such as we are accustomed to in the annals of the kingdoms of this world. Long periods are dispatched summarily or passed over in complete silence, while others are narrated at considerable length. This varied mode of treatment is not to be explained

by the comparative wealth or poverty of the materials at the writer's command, but depends on their value and importance for the great end in view—the development of the Divine plan as set forth in the national life of the chosen people. The events described are not selected capriciously. Critical epochs are chosen—turning-points in the history of the people, on which their future fortunes depended for weal or for woe, according as they obeyed or resisted God's revealed will. Thus the narrative illustrates the Divine law of retribution, in the variation of the fortunes of Israel, in exact correspondence with their changing relations to their theocratic King; while we watch how certainly national disaster follows apostasy, and prosperity attends faithful adherence to the covenant of God. This, which is the leading principle of these historico-prophetic writings, and which gives them their chief value for us, and for all future time, is nowhere more plainly to be traced than in the Books of Samuel. "They are not," in the words of Bishop Wordsworth, "a congeries of ill-digested materials, or of fruitless repetitions, but a *prophetic* history of real events preparing the way for the priesthood and kingdom and prophetic office of Christ, and foreshadowing them. They hold a place of their own, and perform a peculiar work, not only in relation to the Hebrew nation, but in a higher function, as preparing the way for Christ. The Apostle Peter marks their character in this respect when he says, 'All the prophets from *Samuel* . . . have foretold of these days'—the days of Christ and the Gospel" (Acts 3 : 24). The eye does not rest on the persons and events recorded, and stop there; but seeing in them illustrations, as striking as they are unmistakable, of the principles of God's moral government of mankind, and the great ends of all his dealings with them, is led onward to Him of whom every righteous king, true prophet, and holy priest was a type, in whom God's will has been fully declared, and His purposes summed up—"the Lord's Anointed," "the Son of David," "Christ, the King." E. V.

The history of Israel has four main heroes—Moses, Samuel, David, Ezra. Moses gave them their freedom and their law; Samuel their order and unity; David their poetry and their power; Ezra gave them a collected literature and a religious education. If David was the founder of Israel as a monarchy, Ezra is the founder of Israel as a church. But the lesson of the Old Testament history is mainly this—that, whether as a Kingdom or as a Church, the true Israel had but two sources of power and

permanence—the law of a Divine holiness, the grasp of a Messianic hope. *Farrar*.

RECAPITULATION OF POINTS TOUCHING THE LAW OF MOSES.

The civil code introduced by Moses, and the ordinances of worship appointed by him, furnish the needed starting-point in the study of the institutions and life of Israel. There is just the same authority for referring these to Moses as there is for believing that he acted as judge and leader of Israel in their coming forth from Egypt. The whole subsequent history unfolds from this fixed point, is determined by it, and cannot be properly understood without it. The Pentateuchal Law claims in the most unambiguous manner to have been given and recorded by Moses. The general character of the legislation, and the terms in which it is couched, accord with this claim. Its truth is further vouched for in the most direct and positive manner in the history of his trusted attendant and successor Joshua (1 : 7, 8 ; 8 : 31-34 ; 22 : 5 ; 23 : 6) ; further by Ju. 3 : 4 ; 1 K. 2 : 3 ; 2 K. 10 : 31 ; 14 : 6 ; 17 : 37 ; 18 : 6, 12 ; 21 : 8 ; 22 : 8 ; 23 : 24, 25, not to speak of numerous testimonies of later date. The history and legislation of the Pentateuch lies at the basis of all the subsequent history of the Old Testament. It is presupposed in the Psalms. It is presupposed in the Prophets. Moses' authorship has the explicit sanction of our blessed Lord Himself. The prior existence of the Pentateuch is shown by its being so interwoven with all subsequent portions of the history and literature of Israel that it cannot be torn from it without the destruction of the whole. It is upon this immovable foundation that the traditional view securely reposes. W. H. G.

The two stone tables of the Law are, according to all evidences and arguments, to be ascribed to Moses, and those essential truths and social arrangements which constitute the motive power of the whole history must certainly have been there promulgated and firmly ordained at Sinai. *Ewald*. —The roll of the law (Ex. 19, 24), written down by Moses himself, and inserted into the general historical account of the giving of the law, must be regarded as the central part, as having formed the primary basis of the Pentateuch. The other laws promulgated during the stay in the wilderness of Sinai and up to the time when Israel occupied the plains of Moab were orally given by Moses, but written down by those around him, either at his command or of their own accord. On the soil

of the holy land and at the close of an era in the history of Israel was the sacred chronicle commenced. But any account of the history of the Mosaic period necessarily implied that the whole Mosaic legislation should be engrossed, and hence written down. A man, such as the priest Eleazar, the son of Aaron, may have written the large work commencing with "In the beginning God created," etc., into which he also inserted the roll of the law, dwelling perhaps the more briefly on the last addresses of Moses that the latter had himself written them down. Then a second historian, such as *Joshua*, or one of those Elders on whom rested the spirit of Moses, supplemented the work and incorporated with it the book of Deuteronomy, the spirit of which had moulded that of the compiler himself. Thus probably was the *Thorah* (or Law) formed, the two authors having certainly consulted many written documents. Both of them—the priestly Elohists and the prophetic Jehovists—are each in his own way the echo and the copy of their teacher and prototype, the great Lawgiver. Just as the Evangelists wrote the Gospel after the ascension of Christ in His Spirit, so did these two after removal of Moses write his law and the history of which it forms part. *Delitsch*.

The compass of the people's obligations, the revelation of God's commanding will, is *the law*, the *fundamental principle* of which is expressed in the words, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11 : 44 f., 19 : 2); or more completely (20 : 7), "Sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am Jehovah your God." The impress of consecration to the holy God is to be stamped on the life of the Israelites in ordinances extending to all important relations and conditions; in every important affair of life the Israelite has to accomplish something which God demands. Therefore in all things he must realize to himself the voice of the commanding God. The traditional division of the law of Moses into *moral*, *ceremonial*, and *juristic laws* may serve to facilitate a general view of theocratic ordinances; but it is incorrect if it seeks to express a distinction within the law, and to claim a difference of dignity for the various parts. For in the law, the most inward commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," stands beside "Thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed." That Israel must be holy, like God, is the ground alike of the command not to be defiled by eating the flesh of certain animals, and of the command to honor father and mother. The whole law, in all its parts, has the same *form* of absolute, unconditional command. Because of this character of

the law, human judgment cannot be allowed to make distinctions between the different precepts. But, so far as man is concerned, the most inconsiderable precept is viewed under the aspect of the obedience demanded for the whole law: "Cursed is he that fulfils not the words of this law to do them" (De. 27 : 26).

It is not true that the law of Moses demands only external conformity to the law, not a frame of mind; that, in short, it demands *legality*, not *morality*. On the contrary, the law insists on the *disposition of the heart* when it says, "Thou shalt not covet;" when it binds men to love God with the whole heart and soul, to be placable toward their fellow-men, and the like, when it demands the circumcision of the heart—that is, the purification and devotion of it to God. But undoubtedly it demands the external as co-ordinate with the internal. And precisely in this lies an important educating element. When all the relations of life, even those merely external, are placed under a direct command of God—when man in all he does or may not do has to render obedience to God, he is thereby led to the truth that what he ought to be is not to be sought in rules of life arbitrarily formed and shaped by conventionality, but in an absolutely perfect will, which conditions and determines all things.

For a right estimate of the law of Moses, the following points have further to be noticed:—(1) The *whole ritual ordinances* to which the Israelite is subject, from his circumcision onward, *have a symbolic character*, mirroring the inner process of sanctification, and so forming the instrument of a tuition advancing from the outer to the inner. The prophets and the Psalms, when they speak of the true sacrifice, the true lustration which man needs, are simply expressing the thoughts that underlie the symbolical ritual. (2) *The precepts of the law are given in detail mainly on the negative side*; what the Israelite may not do is told with great particularity. The scholastic subtlety of the Rabbins, indeed, has made out the considerable number of 248 positive commands, against 365 prohibitions. But it is easy to see that with regard to positive duties the law often states only general rules; that, in fact, many positive points that lie in its intention are not expressly enjoined, but that only the facts, patterns, and institutions are set forth which serve to guide a free development of positive virtues. It was only Jewish *tradition* which at a later period extended its leading-strings over the space which the law had left open for the free development of piety. (3) Finally,—and this is the main point,—we have

to look at the *motives* for fulfilling the law which the law presents. All righteousness required by the law presupposes faith in the divine election, gracious guidance, and promise. The legislation opens with the words, "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself;" and so the *Decalogue* puts at the head of its demands what God has done for Israel. But it is *Deuteronomy* in particular which, by showing how God has loved His people, seeks to excite responsive love as the deepest motive for obedience, and especially to make the law acceptable to the people by awaking a sense of its excellency and fitness (De. 4 : 6-8, 30 : 11-14); though, at the same time, *Deuteronomy* leaves no doubt that the people neither can nor will attain such willingness to obey. O.

No Law-making by the Kings.

One remarkable fact in Hebrew history seems to have been overlooked. At no time during the five centuries covered by the monarchy (1100-588 B.C.) is a word said of a body of laws enacted or codified by any of the kings. That silence of the writers who have recorded the rise and fall of the kingdom is made more impressive by the one law, and the only one, which is ascribed to a king—David's regulation for dividing the spoils of battle between the army in the field and its baggage guard. A thing so small in itself brings into bolder relief the fact of no prince either introducing new laws into the country, or reducing old customs to writing and giving them the force of law. Evidently a law code existed before a king filled the throne of Israel. At the choice of a king for the first time, Samuel the prophet acts the part of a lawgiver; but never, except in the one instance referred to, are Hebrew princes represented as exercising this office. They make no show in history save as administrators or breakers of a code of laws already in existence. A position so singular is filled by the kings of no other nation whose annals have come down to our time. Of the power of law among the Hebrews too much cannot be said. Their proverbs, their popular speech, their songs, and the events of their daily life are full of its praises. Everywhere is seen the reign of law. But the rulers never pride themselves on making new or codifying old laws. They build and endow a magnificent temple, they restore a neglected worship, they repair a temple that has been burned or has fallen into ruins. They rearrange the recognized ministers of religion according to their ideas of what is fitting and honorable; they fortify cities and equip armies at their will, or according to

their ability. But we never see them ordaining new laws, or altering old laws to meet the changing needs of society. Always do they appear as if their hands, quite as much as those of their subjects, were tied by an existing code. A law of the land, given before kings began to rule, seems to have stood high above both throne and people. Unquestionably, a relation so unusual, subsisting for five centuries, is a peculiarity which distinguishes Hebrew history from the history of every other people. No romancer could have invented the idea of laws, once given, remaining unchanged, without addition and without subtraction. Still less could a series of historians have imagined the idea of subjection to these ancient laws in a race of princes, some of whom were conquerors, some tyrants, and some obstinate to their own and to their people's ruin. To call this the result of a designed concealment of facts is an incredible explanation of the silence. The writers had nothing to conceal. They knew that these kings dared not add to or alter the people's law-book. Part of it might be set at defiance for a time, but their pages showed the ruinous consequences of this course, and the power of the law to vindicate its majesty. These writers recognized certain well-marked boundaries, within which the national code confined both king and people. Fullest freedom of action was allowed to them if they did not overstep these limits; no freedom whatever was given to either prince or people to travel beyond. We must therefore go to the history itself to ascertain the beginning and completion of the law code which attained to this paramount rule in the nation. A law-book, once given and remaining unchanged for centuries, is pronounced an impossibility. But theoretical views of the possible or the impossible have no place in the matter. We are dealing only with facts, and these carry us back for the beginning of a law-book to the sojourn of the people in Egypt. *Sime.*

Beneficent Effects of Hebrew Institutions.

All our notions of the Jewish commonwealth are received under a disadvantage, from the circumstance of their reaching us through the channel of inspired history. The inflexible integrity of the record, and its comminative intention, throws a dark color over the general scene. In reading the history of other nations, we see the things of the world in the world's light; but Jewish affairs we look at in the light of heaven; and what otherwise might appear fair, stands forward only as reprehensible. Not one of the Jewish writers, whether historian or

prophet, is the eulogist of his nation, or speaks of Israel as the Greeks of Greece, or the Romans of Rome. How different would be our impressions of the ancient people of Palestine, if some candid Herodotus had left us a description of them, such as they must have appeared to a stranger in the bright era of their history, and when compared with their immediate neighbors. There is good reason to believe that, for diffused enjoyment and personal liberty, for elevation of sentiment, and purity of manners, no contemporary nation could offer any such spectacle of popular felicity. The extreme brevity of the inspired historians, and the prominence given by them to single incidents, operate to deprive us of what might be called our chronological consciousness; and we forget that, while running over a few chapters, we have traversed ages, and have leaped periods exceeding the duration of some mighty empires. Certain seasons of calamity excepted, the Jewish commonwealth rested on the soil, and diffused among a numerous people a large measure of such felicity as earth admits of, during a much longer track of time than can be claimed for the splendor of Grecian liberties and arts; and longer than was allowed to the foreign power of Rome. During at least seven hundred years, Palestine was probably richer in human happiness than any other spot upon earth has ever been.

Considered in their secular aspect, the characteristic principle of the Mosaic Institutions was the private good of the people. Whatever the form of the polity might be, the spirit of it was, in the best sense, popular; since the security, the competence, the personal dignity, and the enjoyments of every son of Abraham were the ruling intention of every enactment. Redeemed from the furnaces of Egypt, and led into a land flowing with milk and honey, the economy of social life was so constructed, as to yield the greatest possible amount of plenty and pleasure to every citizen. Every man who had sprung from the loins of Abraham was noble; and the forfeiture of that patrimony which enabled him to support the simple honors of his birth was a desperate calamity, guarded against by extraordinary provisions. The motto of the commonwealth was—"Every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; none daring to make him afraid." To eat the fat of the land, to make his heart merry with the wine, and to render praise to God, duty to the priest, and a generous portion to the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger, was the precept and privilege of all. Neither national aggrandizement, nor conquest and foreign empire, nor the accumu-

lation of wealth by trade, nor the cultivation of arts and philosophy, was aimed at in the Jewish code; but rather the tranquil happiness and the domestic integrity of every Israelitish home. The Law was a blessing for the basket and the store, for the bed and the table. God's polity was like God's world, in the constitution of which the greatest possible enjoyment of the greatest possible number is the sovereign rule. . . . Rising to view at frequent intervals in these Historical Books, and always in a manner incidental and inartificial, there are evidences irresistible of the existence of deep and vivid domestic affections among the Hebrew people; of individual and family piety, of humane sentiments and usages, of a high and chivalrous sense of honor and patriotism, of a stern justice and of the rights and claims of the destitute and defenceless. I. T.

The bone and marrow, the blood and tissue of American liberty are, in the main, derived from the Jew. The Hebrew Decalogue was the preamble of the American Constitution; the Puritan was the successor to the Hebrew Theocracy. In English history and literature the predilection of the Anglo-Saxon for Old Testament history, with its stern patriarchal figures, its rigorous laws and statutes, its Hebrew names and features is strongly marked. To no other nation did the Hebrew literature become so endeared as a household book and treasury of comfort and inspiration, and permeate the spirit and style, nay, the very sinew of the people, serving as food for the child and as substance for the ripe lawyer and statesman. As the Hebrew spirit of liberty fired the soul of the Puritan into patriotic devotion and loyalty to home and country, so did the Hebrew law mould his piety, his worship, his religious and social life. The Sabbath laws, the poor laws, the Thanksgiving Day, all were constructed after the Hebrew fathers without regard to the altered time and surroundings. The reverential awe of a Holy God of justice pervading Hebrew Scriptures set his heart aglow. The inner law of conscience, the voice of duty, the Hebrew spelled out first, and it found its grandest expression in the glorious declaration of human rights on American soil. Dr. Kohler.

Testimony of Geography, Discovery and Custom.

The geography of Palestine, as we find it to-day, is the strongest testimony of the truth of that history which purports to emanate thence. The natural scenery of Palestine speaks with

but one voice in favor of the Bible ; every word of the sacred narrative receives its best interpretation by being studied in connection with the place where it was recorded. No one can trace, without joy and wonder, the verification which geography pays to the history of the Holy Land. So strong is the argument drawn thence, that the most subtle dialectician is baffled by it, and is entrapped in the net which his own sophistry has spun. *Ritter.*

The same spirit of scepticism which had rejected the early legends of Greece and Rome had laid its hands on the Old Testament and had determined that the sacred histories themselves were but a collection of myths and fables. But suddenly, as with the wand of a magician, the ancient eastern world has been reawakened to life by the spade of the explorer and the patient skill of the decipherer, and now we find ourselves in the presence of monuments which bear the names or recount the deeds of the heroes of Scripture. One by one these "stones crying out" have been examined or more perfectly explained, while others of equal importance are being continually added to them. *Sayce.*

Notwithstanding the numerous races and religions which have for centuries swept in turn across these ruined regions, there remains a stereotyped agreement in almost all the common affairs of life. From the south of Egypt to the far north of Syria, on every farm the plough is of precisely the same make. In every house you visit, the handleless cup out of which you sip your coffee is of the same size and pattern, and so are the basin and ewer with which the servant of your host, when he has girded himself and taken a towel, washes your hands. In each class of life both men and women respectively dress alike, and the material color and style of apparel in the rural districts have in the memory of man continued in all respects precisely the same. No changing fashions, no progress in arts or science varies, or ever appears to have varied, the simple appliances of Palestine. The language, too, which is now in use retains in all respects the very phrases of Scripture. A farmer coming into his fields to this day will greet his laborers in the very words of Boaz, "The Lord be with you," and will receive for answer, "The Lord bless thee." Indeed there is scarcely a devout expression to be found in the pages of Holy Writ that does not now flow, alas ! but too insincerely from the tongue of modern dwellers in Palestine. In a word, to this day, in things sacred and secular, the speech of all Syria is unchanged, and listening to it one

catches everywhere distinct and startling echoes of Scripture story.

The coarseness of certain expressions which the Bible contains, and the handling of subjects the very mention of which we should account impure, have been an honest difficulty to many earnest and sensitive minds. Yet a comparatively short residence in Palestine serves to remove it altogether ; and indeed no Eastern could possibly see any objection on this score. They still, as in ancient times, use the greatest plainness of speech throughout the Holy Land. Things, the very mention of which decency forbids among us, are there spoken of freely before women and children by people of the highest class, and of the greatest respectability and refinement. I will go further and boldly say, that seeing the Bible purports to be an Eastern book, written in the East, first, and for long ages only, addressed to Easterns, it could not possibly be genuine if these very matters, which have given rise to such blasphemous cavils, were absent from its pages ! *Neil.*

In no one of all the innumerable communications contained in Scripture, is there ever any regard paid to the gratification of mere curiosity. Facts and events are exhibited no farther than they bear on the point which appears to be in view ; and in many instances we are left without satisfaction where our curiosity is most ardently awake. The information which commentators in such cases are so ready to supply, by probability or conjecture, proves that the original was not the composition of human wisdom. *Haldane.*—The Bible deals but very sparingly in the startling, the terrifying, the horrible. It does not exclude this element : but its place is carefully limited, and other elements abound on every side of it. And this may show us that, neither in preaching, nor in religious literature, nor in common literature, is it wholesome or desirable that this element should often predominate. That is one lesson as to wholesome and useful literature that the Word of God may supply. *W. G. B.*

When it is proposed to "treat the Bible like any other book," it is lawful to inquire, not only how other books are to be treated, but whether the Bible is, according to its own claims, and in fact, like any other book. Let it be assumed that there is a definite and ascertained law of human progress under natural influences, and that the grade of moral and intellectual attainment so reached at any period may be confi-

dently determined ; this will be irrelevant in Bible analysis unless we are prepared in advance to admit that Israel and the Bible came to be what they were and are wholly through natural agencies. This is, in fact, assumed by those who dismember and redistribute the sacred record according to what, as they conclude, must have been the stages of progress reached by Israel in the natural order of growth and enlightenment. Revelation and miracle are, *ex hypothesi*, excluded and prophecy made retrospective or contemporary. The Bible is not like any other book—in its products, in its insight and foresight, in complex unity of doctrine, in its central and informing Christ, whose testimonies and life features thrust themselves back, like the genealogic records that introduce His biog-

raphy, through all the strata of the old record, touching and holding them in place. Israel is as unique as the Old Testament, to which it lingers as custodian, in a kind of posthumous life ; the prophecies of that Old Testament being as curiously fulfilled in its dethronement and scattering, because of the repudiation of the Messiah foretold therein, as in the exaltation of the Gentiles who accepted that Messiah and the New Testament *régime* which He brought. Biblical criticism has its function, and is serviceable in its proper and modest sphere. But “the bumble-bee’s theory of the universe” is not likely to reverse Copernicus, and a vagrant and fantastic pencil-point is not likely to puncture hopelessly the faith of men in a supernatural Bible. *J. B. Thomas.*

Section 201.

THE BOOKS INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME : COLLECTIVELY ; JOSHUA ; JUDGES ; FIRST AND SECOND SAMUEL ; KINGS ; CHRONICLES. THE CHRONOLOGY.

IN these books is given the history of the conquest and occupation of Palestine by the Hebrews, from their entrance into the land of Canaan under Joshua, to the close of the reign of Solomon. B.

It may be well, at this point, to trace, in review, the unity of design pervading these sacred writings. They reveal, in the Book of Genesis, God’s relation to the universe as its creator, and its rightful proprietor and sovereign. They then record the early history and the universal corruption of mankind, and the manifestation of God’s righteous abhorrence of evil in the destruction of the guilty race. They relate the history of the new race of man, till it becomes manifest that this signal lesson is without effect ; that the tendency to evil is innate and universal, with no power of self-renovation. They then record the initiatory steps for the renovation of man, and for perpetuating the knowledge and worship of the true God. Thenceforward they are occupied with the history of the individual race, through which this Divine purpose was to be effected. In the fullness of time, and after a protracted period of probation, in which its necessity was fully shown, this purpose was accomplished in the coming of the DIVINE DELIVERER. This singleness of purpose, and continuity of plan, are seen running through all these sacred Scriptures.

All else is incidental, and subsidiary to the main design. Without this prolonged test of man’s inability for self-renovation, the history of the Divine government would have been fragmentary, incomplete, and unsatisfying. *Conant.*

With forethoughtful wisdom, God made provision in the Hebrew constitution for a continuous Hebrew history and for its preservation. The tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron were the learned class of the nation. Exempted largely from engrossing, exhaustive toil, it was one of their official duties to care for the religious instruction of the people. It was made both their interest and their duty to guard the archives of the nation ; to keep the Books of Moses and the later historical books as they were prepared. That the original plan assigned to them also the function of national historian is perhaps possible, but it is not definitely indicated. If such were the plan it was soon modified. Whether because of negligence on their part, or because their Levitical duties were all they could perform well, or because some special qualifications were naturally requisite for this service, it came to pass that very early after Moses the Lord raised up a series of *prophets* to write the history each of his own times. The sacred books show plainly that Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and other men of this class, became national historians. Their suc-

cession and their services were by far the more reliable from the fact that God himself filled their ranks ; that they did not hold office by hereditary right or by any public appointment from men, but directly and immediately from God himself. What better guaranty than this can be rationally demanded? H. C

The *authority* of a writing, claimed to be Divine, does not in any case rest on the particular writer or human instrumentality, but on the Divine attestation given to it ; and this attestation can be given, as in many cases it has been, to writings which have come to us anonymously, and of which the particular writer cannot be determined with certainty. The *credibility* of a writing, as an historical narrative, is determined by those tests which historical criticism applies to such compositions. These writings have borne, unshaken, the most searching application of these tests. The narration is a simple statement of facts, everywhere consistent with itself, without exaggeration or repression, free from partiality or prejudice in dealing with persons and their acts, recording the frailties alike of the high and the low, the monarch and the subject, the most honored and those of least account, with the same freedom and impartiality. These books have always formed a part of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, called in the New Testament "the Oracles of God" (Rom. 3 : 2), "the Scriptures" (Matt. 21 : 42), "the holy Scriptures" (Rom. 1 : 2 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 15) That they were familiar to writers of the New Testament is shown by frequent references to incidents which they record.

The leading object of all these historical books is kept steadily in view. The religious aspects of the history are never lost sight of. Whatever tends to the advancement of the true religion, to establish and perpetuate the knowledge and worship of the true God, is made matter of permanent record, as well as all that is of a contrary tendency. The great conflict of the ages, between the one true religion and all false ones, between the recognition of the One God, the Self-existent and Eternal, and countless gods of human devising, is here brought to the direct issue, "choose ye whom ye will serve." Under no circumstances more favorable to a fair decision could this alternative be offered. Its failure showed clearly the inefficacy of law, under the most favoring conditions, to restrain or properly direct the evil tendencies of man's nature ; and it points forward to the ultimate end and purpose of all Revelation, the coming of the great Deliverer. *Conant.*

The Books of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings

present the appearance of one work, giving a continuous history of Israel from the times of Joshua to the death of Jehoiachin, while it may be added the Book of Judges is not a continuation of Joshua, but opens with a repetition of the same events with which Joshua closes. In like manner the Book of Ruth is no less clearly connected with the Book of Judges by its opening verse and the epoch to which the whole book relates. And generally the style of the narrative, ordinarily quiet and simple, but rising to great vigor and spirit when stirring deeds are described, and the introduction of poetry or poetic style in the midst of the narrative, constitute such strong features of resemblance, as lead to the conclusion that these several books form but one work. P. S.

These histories approach much more nearly to the character of records contemporaneous with the events recorded, than they would if they had been compiled according to modern methods. The inspiration to which these books owe their place in the canon is primarily that of the men who wrote the books in their present form, and is entirely independent of all questions concerning the inspiration of the men who originally wrote the writings from which our present books were compiled, and of all questions touching the inspiration of any actual or supposed men of later times, who edited or collected the scriptural books. W. S. B.

Historic Connection of all these Books.

We have in the Books of Kings, not only evidence of a framework of national observance existing in the ninth and tenth centuries before Christ, which was based upon the Law of Moses and implied the existence of that Law and is not to be explained without it, but also references to a period of the national history subsequent indeed to the time of Moses, but long anterior to that of the kings. It is certain that toward the close of the kingdom of Israel the two tribes and a half were in possession of the lands which they had held from the time of Moses, the title-deeds of which were the records in Joshua and the Book of Numbers.

Again, the Books of Kings are unintelligible without the record in Samuel. We know nothing of the origin of the monarchy, and still less of the extraordinary attachment of the people to the house of David, but for the narrative of the earlier events recorded in Samuel. And, what is more, the events themselves in Kings, supposing them to be historically true, presuppose a foundation of earlier events which must in some respects have resembled those that are

recorded in Samuel. For some reason or other the throne is supposed everywhere to be vested in the family of David by a literal Divine right. Such a notion would not have taken the hold of the national mind which it evidently did take, had there not been some very marked and special circumstances attending the accession of David.

Going back to the Books of Samuel themselves, we have presupposed in them the main features of the history of the Judges. We have the principle of the Theocracy clearly defined, and thrown into sharper contrast from the strong national desire to have a king. But there is this feature also, that the prominent foes of Israel are no longer those who are commonly named in Judges, but another race who had, it appears, lately become powerful, namely, the Philistines, and who in the Book of Judges are chiefly mentioned in connection with Samson, who must have shortly preceded Samuel. Now this fact itself indicates a considerable lapse of time. The history of Samuel, therefore, requires to be supplemented by some such history as that recorded in Judges. That history is indeed fragmentary, and disappointing in many ways, yet it serves to fill up a blank which it would otherwise be hopeless to supply.

But then, once more, the history of the Judges presupposes that of Joshua. The Theocracy itself must have grown out of something. It may at one time have been exhibited in a more perfect form than we see it in Judges. It was then manifestly in its degeneracy and decadence. What its origin was we know not, and cannot divine, if we reject the origin as described in Joshua and the Pentateuch; for, lastly, the narrative in Joshua is unintelligible, and its development impossible, without the previous history which the books of the Law enshrine. Whenever Joshua was written, the Pentateuch must have been in existence. There is scarcely a chapter which does not imply the previous existence of the Books of Moses, and afford independent testimony to the substantial framework of their historical narrative. Thus we see that in a most remarkable degree the historical element in the literature of the Jews is characterized by the principle of cohesion. S. L.

These books abound with striking and various developments of human nature: and if in reading them we rightly reflect on the conduct of God and on the conduct of man, we cannot fail to derive important instruction from every paragraph. But if we would gain advantage from these books, we must not confine ourselves to

the mere history, but exercise the closest meditation; for the instruction which they are intended to convey to us is not stated, but is to be deduced by us from the sacred narratives. Unless we attend to this, we shall at the most only make ourselves familiar with historical facts. *Jos. Jones.*

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

The Book of Joshua takes up the narrative where it was left near the close of Deuteronomy. The new era in the sacred history, commencing with the call of Abraham, is here resumed; and the development of the Divine purpose, in connection with the history of his posterity, is thenceforward the great theme of the Hebrew Scriptures. *Conant.*

The Book of Joshua bears the same relation to the Pentateuch as the Acts of the Apostles bears to the four Gospels. A useful comparison may be made between the several parts of the Old Testament and those of the New. The Pentateuch in the former answers to the Gospels in the latter: the Book of Joshua answers to the Acts: the writings of the prophets, considered as teachers of religious and moral truth, answer to the Epistles; and parts of Ezekiel and Daniel answer to the Revelation. Here we see the provision that was made in the goodness of God for the instruction and edification of the Jewish and of the Christian Churches. We see it in its analogy: in its substantial identity, and in its circumstantial difference. We compare Moses and Christ, as Paul (Heb. 3: 1-6) teaches us to do. We compare the establishment of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and we see the same power displayed, but in a different manner. We compare the instructions of the prophets and those of the Apostles. We see both Churches looking to the Messiah,—the one to his first, and the other to his second advent. *Jos. Jones.*

The Book of Joshua stands in an intimate relation to the Books of Moses on the one hand, and at the same time presents the opening page of the subsequent history on the other. We find here the fulfilment of the expectations of the patriarchs and of the promises made to them. The work that had been begun by Moses, but was not completed by him, is here brought to a fitting termination. The march out of Egypt, the leadings and the discipline of the wilderness, look to the occupation of Canaan. It has hence become customary, in recent times, to attach this book to the five preceding books as forming with them a Hexateuch, or one work in six parts; this may be admitted without assuming

that all has proceeded from one pen. The Mosaic record may have been completed by another hand, just as Moses transferred the leadership of Israel to another before the purpose of their march was accomplished. The design of this book is to point out the fulfilment of God's promise made to them and to their fathers from the beginning, and the exactness with which Joshua carried into effect the directions given him by Moses. W. H. G.

There is strong internal evidence that the original writer was contemporary with the events. In a few passages he writes in the first person, definitely including himself among the actors. "Until *we* were passed over" (5 : 1) "The land which the Lord swore that he would give *us*" (5 : 6). Note also what he writes of Rahab : "She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day" (6 : 25), showing that the record was written while Rahab yet lived. Many passages give us the definite words of conversation had or directions given, as might be expected in a narrative made at the time and on the spot. The geographical allotments of Canaan among the tribes were matters of contemporary record—wisely, if not even necessarily. The narrative itself notes the fact : "The men went and passed through the land and described it by cities into seven parts *in a book*" (18 : 9). These are points of strong internal proof of a record made very near the time of the events. That Joshua was himself the writer, or at least that it was done under his eye and at his instance, is eminently probable. Trained under Moses—his first and most prominent servant, associate, assistant, and after the death of Moses, his successor, it is almost certain that he was competent to write this history—and that he did. H. C.

There is no dispute that the Book of Joshua in its present form substantially presupposes the Pentateuch in its present form. The term *law* occurs nine times in Joshua, always denoting written divine requirement or revelation. But it denotes this with three different degrees of comprehension. In 1 : 7, 8 ; 8 : 31 ; 22 : 5 ; 23 : 6, it describes the whole of a certain body of legislation given by Moses, large enough for the government of the nation. Probably "the book of the law" (8 : 34, 35), read at a national gathering after the solemnities of the altar at Ebal, was the same (cf. De. 31 : 10–12). But "the copy of the law" (8 : 32), written (not on polished stone but) on the plaster of the altar, and therefore not very finely written, and "all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse," apparently read as a part of the service of the occasion (8 : 34), can hardly have been

more than a short section (or short sections) of the whole body of legislation elsewhere in Joshua called the law. Further, in 24 : 26, "the book of the law of God" is said to have additions made to it by Joshua ; the law is not here regarded as a closed canon from the death of Moses, but as a canon begun by Moses and to be continued by his successors.

This is analogous to what we find in the New Testament and later. No proof need be cited that by the law the New Testament men often mean the Pentateuch as distinguished from the rest of the Old Testament, but they also apply the term to a wider range of writings, presumptively to the whole Old Testament (John 10 : 34 ; 15 : 25 ; 12 : 34 ; 1 Cor. 14 : 21 ; Rom. 3 : 10–19), and sometimes, possibly, to short sections of the writings they held to be sacred, *e.g.* Rom. 7 : 2, 3. This difference of use is important and has not been sufficiently noticed. It is not true that the writers of the Old or the New Testament apply the term the law exclusively to a large body of writings attributed to Moses, but it is true that they never apply the term to any large body of writings except such as may include the sacred writings attributed to Moses. Turning to the direct testimony given by the Book of Joshua, we find this very explicit, not only to the effect that the written law of Moses was in existence before the Book of Joshua was written, but to the effect that it was in existence before the death of Moses ; that it was formally handed over by Moses to Joshua ; that Joshua received and used it ; that it was present when the Ebal altar was built, and was afterward read to the people. W. J. B.

The numerous references to the foregoing history of the Books of Moses render it morally certain that whenever the Book of Joshua was written the Books of Moses were already in existence. The whole framework of Pentateuchal history is presupposed by that of Joshua, which, while it serves to corroborate that history, is itself corroborated by the testimony of subsequent books. It is this peculiar feature of interdependence among the Books of the Old Testament, unlike anything to be found elsewhere, that it is wholly impossible to counterfeit, and that therefore stamps the entire narrative with the impress of substantial truth.

The Book of Joshua is quoted or referred to, and therefore its existence is implied, in Ju. 18 : 31 ; 1 S. 1 : 24 ; 3 : 21 ; Is. 28 : 21, and often in the Psalms. It is referred to in the New Testament, in the defence of Stephen (Acts 7 : 45), and it is directly quoted in Heb. 13 : 5 ; and this endorsement of the Book of

Joshua by the writers of the New Testament is our guarantee for its position in the canon. S. L.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

The Book of Judges takes its name, like the other historical books, from its contents, viz., the history of certain transactions which took place in Israel under the judges. The judges were those extraordinary civil and military rulers who governed Israel in the interval between the death of Joshua and the foundation of the kingdom of Israel; except only that the judgeship of Samuel was a kind of connecting link between the two—Samuel himself being a judge, though of a different character from those that preceded him, and his government merging in the latter part of it into the kingdom of Saul; so that the times of Samuel occupy a middle place between the Judges and the Kings, belonging partly to both, but wholly to neither. *Bp. Hervey.*

The book is irregular in its structure. It is not a consecutive narration of events, in their order and mutual relations. It is rather a series of leading occurrences of the time, characteristic of that unsettled and turbulent period. It bears throughout the stamp of genuine and authentic history. It was evidently drawn from contemporaneous records of the events narrated, and is mainly composed of them. They have the glow and animation, and the minuteness of detail, that mark an actor in the scenes described, or an interested and diligent observer. The compiler selected from them those which were most adapted to the purpose of these books, to show God's truthfulness and fidelity to his promises, his forbearance, and his readiness to forgive and restore the repentant. *Conant.*

The distinguishing feature in the functions of the Judges, from whom this book takes its name, is that these were not the ordinary rulers of the people, but were raised up by the special providence of God, not only to administer justice in Israel, but to be the "saviours" of his people from the oppression of their enemies (marg. ch. 2 : 16-19; 3 : 9, 15; Obad. 21). These extraordinary Judges, in delivering the chosen people from their oppressors, were not arbitrarily sent forth to their work, but were chosen to vindicate Jehovah's righteousness, that is, his faithfulness to his covenant, in behalf of Israel. His eternal principle is, when his people return to him in penitence, he returns to them in mercy. His salvation and his righteousness go hand in hand. The Lord raised them up to save Israel, at intervals, as need required. They were the vicegerents of Him who

was at one and the same time the civil, as well as the spiritual, King of Israel. A. R. F.

From its contents we can only say that it must have been composed *about* Samuel's time; that is, after the death of Samson, and before the capture of Jerusalem by David. As the events related in it certainly cover a space of some hundreds of years, the writer, whoever he be, stands in the position of Moses with respect to the greater part of Genesis, being the recorder of his country's traditions during a space generally estimated as about equal to that which intervened between the call of Abraham and the birth of Moses. There is every reason to believe that national records, which (as we have seen) existed in the days of Moses and Joshua, were continued by their successors, and that these formed the materials from which the Book of Judges was composed by its author. Of such records we have a specimen in the Song of Deborah and Barak, an historical poem embodying the chief facts of Deborah's judgeship. It is reasonable to suppose that there may have been many such compositions, belonging to the actual time of the events, of which the historian could make use; and it is also most probable that chronicles were kept even at this early date, like those to which the writers of the later historical books refer so constantly. G. R.

The method of the Hebrew historical writers seems to have been to incorporate into their work large portions of the ancient materials without altering them, only adding occasional remarks of their own. This method is very apparent in the Book of Judges. It seems scarcely open to doubt that the mass of the book consists of the original contemporary annals of the different tribes. The minute and graphic details of the narratives, Deborah's song, Jotham's fable, Jephthah's message to the king of Ammon, the exact description of the great Parliament at Mizpeh, and many other like portions of the book, must be contemporary documents. Then, again, the history of Samson the Danite, and that of the Danite expedition to Laish, indicate strongly the annals of the tribe of Dan as their common source; while the importance attached to Gilead in chs. 10, 11, and 12 points to annals of Gilead. But at the same time the presence of a compiler and editor of these various documents is distinctly visible in those prefatory remarks contained in ch. 2 : 10-19; 3 : 1-7, which review the whole subsequent narrative, as well as in casual observations thrown in from time to time, as at ch. 17 : 6; 18 : 1, etc., and in the general arrangement of the materials. There are in this book many direct

references to the law and the books of Moses. A. C. H.

As the history of Judges claims to have occurred after the time of Joshua, so the composition of the work presupposes that of Joshua. It is not possible to conceive that the Book of Judges being written, the Book of Joshua was compiled subsequently. Several of the statements in Judges are confirmed in other books. The New Testament alludes to it in several passages, and this recognition is *our* warrant for its position in the canon. The internal proofs of its veracity are also numerous. S. L.

The style of the Book of Judges is, like that of all the historical books of the Bible, characterized by a matchless simplicity, gravity, straightforwardness of manner, carrying with it, irresistibly, the impression of the most utter impartiality and honesty of statement. The faults and crimes, alike of individuals and of the nation collectively, with all the humiliations and sufferings consequent upon their guilt, are set down with exactly the same evident historic truthfulness as their most heroic deeds and happiest prosperity. The style is also peculiarly graphic, dramatic, picturesque. While its narratives fascinate the attention of children, they are equally suited to engage and interest the theologian or the philosophical student of human history. What the historian omits to say is almost as significant as the things which he does say. How concise the narrative, and yet how completely it does manage to characterize the period, and at the same time teach the true philosophy of its strangely chequered history! Hence, the everlasting interest of it, and its inexhaustible instructiveness. *An.*

Of all the Old Testament books, the Judges, if read superficially, seems to reveal the least of the scheme of redemption, the progress in its development being so dubious as to appear like retrogression. Nevertheless, here also, as in all Scripture, this precious truth is discoverable in the office of the judges and the deliverances which, under God, they wrought for the people. As the reader is led from Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the Judges, from Samuel to David, and from David to David's Son, he cannot fail to recognize one divine plan which constantly draws nearer to the great disclosure. At times the progress of this plan may be scarcely perceptible by reason of the failures of God's people; still, it exists; there is veritable movement. The doctrine grows, the mighty secret of the ages and of the worlds gradually approaches a full revelation; and faith discerns it as certainly in Judges as in Exodus or Joshua. *Moorehead.*

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

The two Books of Samuel, like the two Books of Kings, originally formed an undivided whole. The Septuagint translators, regarding the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings as a complete History of the Kingdom from its foundation to its fall, divided the work into four books, which they styled *Books of the Kingdoms*. Jerome followed this division in the Vulgate, altering the name to *Books of the Kings*, which is retained as an alternative title in the English Bible.

The title Samuel does not denote authorship, but like the titles Joshua, Ruth, and Esther, commemorates the prominent actor in the events recorded in the book. Its adoption shows a true insight into the connection of the history it contains. It stands as a monument of the greatness of the Prophet who was Jehovah's instrument for establishing the Kingdom of Israel, and guiding the chosen people through a crisis in its history second in importance only to the Exodus. A. F. K.

The Books of Samuel are so called because they describe his work for Israel; and it is not too much to say of him, that as Moses was the founder, so it was Samuel who reorganized and developed the political constitution of the Jewish nation, and enriched it with institutions which made it capable of taking the high place among the families of mankind to which the providence of God was calling it. R. P. S.—In these books Samuel stands out as the great central figure, guiding and controlling all the events of the earlier part of the history by his personal influence during his life, and whose power and spirit survived, even after his death, in that monarchy which he was God's chosen instrument of calling into existence, and moulding into shape by his counsels and commands. To adopt the words of Keil, "the title, 'the Book of Samuel,' was intended to indicate that the spirit of Samuel formed the soul of the true kingdom in Israel, and that the earthly throne of the Israelitish kingdom of God derived its strength and perpetuity from the Spirit of the Lord which lived in the prophet." E. V.

Two great institutions were now to be prominently brought forward and established, both marking a distinct advance in the history of Israel, and showing forth more fully than before its typical character. These two institutions were: *the Prophetic Order* and *the Monarchy*. Both are connected with the history of Samuel. And this explains alike why the books which record this part of sacred history bear the name of *Samuel*, and why they close not with the death of David, as might have been expected in a bi-

ography or in a history of his reign, but with the final establishment of his kingdom. At the close of 2 S. four chapters are added as a sort of appendix, in which various events are arranged, not chronologically, but in accordance with the general plan and scope of the work, which is : to present Israel as the kingdom of God, and as under the guidance of the spirit of prophecy. This also explains two other peculiarities. In a work compiled with such an object constantly in view, we do not expect nor do we find in it a *strictly chronological arrangement* of events. Again, we notice large gaps in the history of Samuel, Saul, and David, long periods and important facts being omitted, with which the author *must* have been acquainted,—and to which, indeed, in some instances, he afterward expressly refers,—while other periods and events are detailed at great length. All these peculiarities are not accidental but designed, and in accordance with the general plan of the work. For we must bear in mind that as in the case of other parts of Holy Scripture, so in the Books of Samuel, we must not look for biographies, as of Samuel, Saul, and David, nor yet expect merely an account of their administration, but a *history of the kingdom of God* during a new period in its development and in a fresh stage of its onward movement toward the end. That end was the establishment of the kingdom of God in him to whom alike the Aaronic priesthood, the prophetic order, and Israel's royalty were intended to point. These three institutions were prominently brought forward in the new period which opens in the Books of Samuel. A. E.

That these books were a part of the original Canon of Scripture has never been questioned. They are authentic history, drawn from original and contemporaneous records. Such records are frequently mentioned by name. Among them are "the book of Samuel the seer," "the book of Nathan the prophet," "the book of Gad the seer," mentioned in 1 Chron. 29 : 29, and 2 Chron. 9 : 29 ; "the Chronicles of King David," mentioned in 1 Chron. 27 : 24 ; "the book of Shemaiah the prophet," "of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies," mentioned in 2 Chron. 12 : 15. To these were added two special officers of the king ; namely, the recorder (2 S. 8 : 16), the king's annalist, whose business it was to record the events of his reign, and the king's scribe (2 S. 8 : 17 ; 2 K. 12 : 10), the royal secretary, to write the king's commands and edicts, and do other services of the pen as the second reference shows. *Conant*.

If then the Book of Samuel was compiled

largely from the chronicles of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, supplemented by other records preserved in the Schools of the Prophets, it follows that it rests upon the best possible authority. Samuel is the historian of his own life-time, which included the greater part of Saul's reign : Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign. A. F. K.

Each of the three prophets, with whom David lived in the closest intimacy, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan, wrote a memoir of that part of his life which came respectively under their notice. The close relation maintained between David and Samuel is shown by the former taking refuge with the latter when he fled from the court of Saul. Gad joined him in his wanderings, and lived at his court, and Nathan was the faithful mentor of his later years. Though these books have not come down to us in their original form, we cannot doubt that we have their substance, and generally their actual contents, in the *First and Second Books of Samuel*, with 1 K. 1 : 2.

Another contemporary authority was the "*Chronicles (or State Papers) of King David*," a record which David undertook with his characteristic love of truth and order. That the substance of this work is preserved in the "*First Book of Chronicles*" is clear from its very form. Beginning from Adam, with the genealogies, which the Jews justly regarded as the basis of all history, and in them giving the most minute account of the tribe of Judah and the line of David, it dismisses Saul with the genealogy of his family, and only breaks out into the form of a consecutive narrative with the battle in which he died and from which the reign of David began. The rest of the book is occupied entirely with the history of David. P. S.

Its acceptance in the Christian Church rests upon the fact that it formed an integral part of those Jewish Scriptures, which were received by our Lord and His Apostles as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Our Lord appealed to one of the narratives contained in it as teaching the great principle that the ceremonial law must give way to the law of mercy : the Magnificat shows evident familiarity with the Song of Hannah : Peter, Stephen, and Paul refer to the history contained in it.

The *historical accuracy* of the book is remarkably borne out by the internal evidence. It is not to be denied that difficulties and discrepancies exist, which it is hard, perhaps impossible, to explain or reconcile. But the forcible simplicity and grace of the narrative ; the vivid-

ness with which the actors in the various events stand out before us ; the minuteness of detail with regard to time and circumstance : the accurate descriptions of places ; all agree to confirm the conclusion that the greater part of the work is derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries, and in many cases handed down to us in their actual words. A. F. K.

Contents of Books of Samuel. 1 S. 1-15 contains a history of Israel from the time of the birth of the prophet Samuel, to the time when David appears. The remaining sixteen chapters are made up of incidents from the life of David, including an account of the latter part of the reign of Saul. 2 S. is a history of the reign of David. The last four chapters contain six short pieces which are evidently appendices to the connected part of the book. In mentioning that David reigned forty years and six months, the Books of Samuel presuppose the death of David. W. J. B.

The history in the Book of Samuel is written on the same plan as that of the exodus from Egypt. Two actors or speakers, and a suffering or a rejoicing chorus, appear on earth ; an umpire looks down from heaven, awarding praise or blame, reward or punishment. Although the scenes are continually shifting, the general plan remains the same throughout. Israel is the chorus, which passes its comments on the deeds done, which suffers or rejoices as events fall out. Jehovah is the unseen umpire, whose goings it is sometimes hard to follow in the darkness, but whose doings always reveal a power making for righteousness among men. At the opening of the history Eli and Samuel are the speakers named. As the action proceeds, Samuel and Saul stand forth before the world. When the scene next changes, David is the upholder of the right ; Saul is the doer of the wrong. While one befriends, the other troubles the people. But again the scene is changed. David is the troubler and wrong-doer ; Absalom, himself most unworthy, is the avenger of the wrong. The story in Samuel ends without punishment befalling the guilty captain, who had heaped up unrighteousness against himself for a generation, the great soldier, Joab. The same plan of writing history pervades the first eleven chapters in the Book of the Kings. Solomon at first maintains and represents the cause of right ; Joab meets his doom by Solomon's command. A history, so singularly written, carries proof of unity of authorship on its face. While it differs largely from the history and the legislation in the Pen-

tateuch, the plan leaves no doubt of the writer's indebtedness to that book. His words and ideas echo its words and ideas with unmistakable clearness. *Sime.*

THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

That these books were a part of the original Canon of Scripture has never been questioned. As was said of the Books of Samuel, they are authentic history, drawn from the original and contemporaneous records there referred to. To these are to be added, "the book of the acts of Solomon," mentioned in 1 K. 11 : 41 ; "the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel," mentioned in 1 K. 14 : 19 ; "the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah," mentioned in 1 K. 14 : 29. From these original records the compiler has drawn the materials of a consecutive and well-digested narrative. The arrangement is chronological ; at the same time exhibiting the mutual relations of simultaneous events, wherever such occur. *Conant.*

Many histories are books of kings and their reigns, to which the affairs of their kingdoms are reduced. The Holy Scripture is the history of the kingdom of God among men, under the several administrations of it. The particular history now before us accounts for the affairs of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, yet with special regard to the kingdom of God among them ; still it is a sacred history, much more illustrative and not less entertaining than any of the histories of the kings of the earth. H.

THE CHRONICLES.

The two Books of Chronicles, which originally formed one, stand last of all in the Hebrew Canon. They appear to be, in a great measure, compilations from official records kept in Jerusalem, and from historical or biographical works, by Nathan, Iddo the seer, and other writings. D. F.

The writer of the First Book of Kings derives his account of Solomon from a document which he calls "the Book of the Acts of Solomon ;" while the author of the Second Book of Chronicles cites three works as furnishing him with materials for this part of his history—"the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat." These last were certainly the works of contemporaries ; and the same may be presumed of the other ; since the latter compiler is not likely to have possessed better materials than the earlier. We may therefore conclude that we have in Kings and Chronicles the history of Solomon's reign

—not perhaps exactly in the words of contemporary writers, but substantially as they delivered it. And the writers were persons who held the same high position under Solomon which the composers of the Books of Samuel had held under Saul and David. G. R.

The Books of Chronicles were obviously designed to furnish the Jewish people a record of their national history from its beginning to the time of their return from the Babylonian exile. They are prefaced by a collection of genealogies, but the more detailed narrative begins with the reign of David, under whom Jerusalem became the chosen seat of the national government and worship. The author refers to seventeen documentary sources, consisting of historical annals, prophetic monographs and commentaries on the same, and dwells at length on those acts of David and Solomon which tended to centralize the worship of Israel. He lived some time after the Babylonian exile, was probably a priest, and aimed to enhance in the minds of his readers the theocratic calling of the Jewish people and the sacred character of their institutions. A work of this kind would have been naturally prompted by the circumstances of the Jews after the rebuilding of the temple and the organization of the returned exiles at Jerusalem. *Terry.*

There is a marked difference between the object regarded by the author of the Kings in writing his history, and that regarded by the Chronicler. While the latter is a writer of church history, the former is a politician, recording the fortunes of the people generally. Whoever puts the Books of Kings and the Maccabees on one side, with Chronicles on the other, will feel, on passing from the former to the latter, the same change of atmosphere which we feel on passing from the civil to the church history of a country. Everything wears another look, because we are regarding the world from a new point of view and through a different medium. Events, which seemed fully detailed in the civil history of a country, appear only half recorded when we turn to its church history. But this change of handling is a change which many writers forget to recognize as imparting a justifiably different color to the story of Israel in the pages of the Chronicler when we compare his book with that of the Kings. *Simé.*

THE RELATION OF THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES TO THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

The First Book of the Chronicles contains another history of David's reign. Many passages are word for word the same as the correspond-

ing passages in the Book of Samuel; and many passages agree in substance, though differing more or less in detail. But much that is contained in Samuel is omitted in Chronicles, and much of the information in Chronicles is supplementary to the narrative of Samuel. Neither book is a complete history of David's reign, each compiler *selected* from the materials before him such portions as suited his purpose. In general the compiler of the Book of Samuel gives a history of David's reign with special reference (a) to the vicissitudes through which he was raised by the care and guidance of Jehovah to be the head of a mighty kingdom: (b) to matters of, comparatively speaking, private interest in his life: (c) to the chastisements by which he was punished for his sin. He thus portrays David the man as well as David the King. The compiler of Chronicles gives prominence (a) to all matters of religious ceremonial, calling special attention to the agency of the Priests and Levites: (b) to the chief steps in the rise and progress of David's kingdom, omitting the reverses which from time to time checked its growth. These differences correspond remarkably to the age and object of the two historians. The unknown compiler of Samuel was undoubtedly a prophet, and his narrative is penetrated by a prophetic spirit. He drew up, no long time after the events, a narrative of the foundation of the Theocratic Monarchy, selecting such matter as illustrated God's providential dealings with the king He had chosen.

The Book of Chronicles was written after the Return from the Captivity. Its author was most probably Ezra, who was a priest, and his main objects in compiling it were (a) to publish trustworthy genealogical records with a view to the resettlement of the land, and the re-establishment of regular services in the restored temple; (b) to rekindle something of national life and spirit, and make the people feel that they were still the representatives of the Kingdom of God, and that national prosperity depended upon faithfulness to Jehovah. With this design he drew up a compendious history, tracing the fortunes of the kingdom of David from its foundation, and selecting especially such passages of the history as present the best kings engaged in promoting the cause of religion, and regulating the services of the house of God; and moreover laying particular stress upon the direct intervention of God for the reward of righteousness and the punishment of evil-doing. Its purpose is *didactic* rather than *historical*, and its tone, in accordance with the profession of its author, *priestly* rather than *prophetic*. Hence the

prominence given to religious ceremonial and Levitical and priestly work in the history of David's reign : hence the silence with which the darker episodes of that reign are passed over. The historian must not be accused of unfaithfulness, or inaccuracy, or prejudice, for adopting such a method of treatment ; his history does not profess to be complete, and his selection of facts is justified by the special purpose which he has in view. Such a review of its past history was well calculated to quicken the energies of the nation for the new era of its existence upon which it was entering ; and to us the preservation of the work is most valuable, presenting as it does another side of the national life, and adding in no small degree (so far as concerns the period covered by the Second Book of Samuel) to the completeness and truthfulness of the picture which we can draw of David's reign, and the lessons which we can derive from it. A. F. K.

THE CHRONOLOGY.

The historical books both of the Old and New Testament are all alike in this, that they are histories not of individuals but of the Kingdom of God. Hence, among other characteristics, the comparative neglect of chronology. *Plummer*.

Chronology of the Judges. Current opinions may be arranged in three classes : (1) Those who in a general way defend the numeral 480 (*Amer. Ed. Lange*). (2) Those who hold that the period was at least a century or two longer than that (*McClintock and Strong Cyc.*). (3) Those who regard the numeral 480 as a century and a half too long (*Pul. Com. Judges*). Back to about 800 B. C. the differences of opinion in regard to biblical chronology concern matters of detail ; the differences in regard to dates earlier than about 800 B. C. are radical, and, at present, irreconcilable. In dealing with the dates previous to David, it is very common to reject the 480 found in 1 K. 6 : 1, the 300 found in Ju. 11 : 26, the 450 and the 40 found in Acts 13 : 20, 21, and other biblical numerals. But notwithstanding this confusion of current opinion, it seems to me that the problem of the biblical numerals for the times of the Judges is really not difficult of solution, provided one attends, at the outset, to certain rudimentary facts and principles. First, we need, here as elsewhere, to keep steadily in mind the familiar fact that biblical time-statements do not ordinarily give us the measurement of time from one point to another, but simply the number of successive periods that were wholly or partly included in the time described ; for example, the three days that Jesus

lay in the grave were not a period of seventy-two hours, but a period of unknown length, extending over the whole or parts of the three successive days—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Again, of especial importance to the understanding of the chronology of the period of the Judges is the paying of due attention to the mode of speaking employed, for example, in Ju. 14 : 17, where it is said that Samson's wife wept upon him "the seven days while their feast lasted." This does not mean that she began weeping when the seven days began, but only that, after she began weeping, either the fourth day or the seventh (see verses 14, 15), she kept it up till some time on the closing day of that period of seven days. Parallel instances are 1 S. 7 : 15 ; 14 : 52 ; Nu. 14 : 33, 34 ; cf. De. 2 : 14. It is evidently supposable that the phrase "the land had rest forty years," as used in Judges, may be a phrase of the same sort, and may simply mean that the land had rest to the close of the forty year period then current, not indicating at all when the condition of rest began.

With these points in mind, note that in Gideon's time a change of constitution took place in Israel. The people proposed to make him king. He refused, but from that time on the judges followed one another in a continuous succession, whereas before that time the judges seem to have been raised up only on particular occasions. Add to this that with the change of constitution the Book of Judges changes its method of giving chronological data. Before this change, we have the forty year periods of rest ; after it we have none of them ; we have periods of forty years and we have times of rest, but we have no periods of which it is said that the land had rest forty years. Again, after the change, we are told how long the administration of each judge lasted, while no such item is given in regard to Gideon or any judge before him. The suggestion is very strong that for the time before the death of Gideon the forty year rest-periods include the other dates that are given. Taking this as a basis on which to work out the biblical numbers, we find that they at once fall into a consistent and complete scheme, which includes all the numbers given for the period, in the New and Old Testaments, with no need to reject or change any of them. Then if we work out the history on the basis of the chronology thus ascertained, we shall find that it at once assumes continuity, and that most of its supposed difficulties vanish. These facts, to one who actually works them through, are sufficient proof of the correctness of the scheme. It may be compactly stated as follows :

Five forty year periods, beginning with the close of the 40 years of the exodus, the other numerals given for these periods being included in the five forties (Ju. 3 : 11, 30 ; 5 : 31 ; 8 : 28), 200 years.
Administrations of Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Samson (Ju. 9 : 22 ; 10 : 2, 3 ; 15 : 20, compared with 10 : 7), in years, 3+23+22+20= . . . 68 "
Ammonite oppression (Ju. 10 : 8). 18 "

(This is the round number 300, Ju. 11 : 26.)
Administration of Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Eli, and interregnum (Ju. 12 : 7, 9, 11, 14 ; 1 S. 4 : 18 ; 7 : 2), in years, 6+7+10+8+40+20 = 91 "
Samuel's administration, computed, 18 "

(Perhaps this, with the 40 years of the exodus added, making 435, is the round number 450 of Acts 13 : 20.)
Reigns of Saul, David, and 4 years of Solomon (Acts 13 : 21 ; 2 S. 5 : 4, 5 ; 1 K. 6 : 1), 40+41+4 = 85 "

(The "long number," 1 K. 6 : 1), 480 "

Other views shorten or lengthen the period by from 100 to 300 years See articles in current commentaries and encyclopædias. It is quite common to regard Samson and Eli as contemporaries, and to count some of the judges as only petty officials. The scheme just given counts Samson as the hero of the Philistine oppression mentioned in Ju. 10 : 7, which was distinct both from the earlier oppression mentioned in Ju. 4 : 31 ; 10 : 11, and from the later oppressions of the times of Eli and of Saul. It also counts every judge as actually chief magistrate of Israel. The 40 in J. 13 : 1 is the same with that in 1 S. 4 : 18. By the usual mode of counting,

David's reign of forty and one half years would be called forty-one years, as above. W. J. B.

Table of Principal Events and Years of Duration.

The Exodus,	..
Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai,	..
Death of Moses and Aaron,	} in the 40th year
Conquest of Canaan by Joshua,	7
Division of Canaan to the Invasion of Chushan Rishathaim,	10
Death of Joshua,	..
Wars of Israel against the Canaanites,	..
Expedition against Benjamin (Ju. 20),	..
Oppression by Chushan Rishathaim,	8
Othniel, and rest of Israel,	40
Oppression by the Moabites,	18
Ehud, and rest of Israel,	80
Victory of Shamgar over the Philistines,	..
Oppression by Jabin,	20
Deborah and Barak, and rest of Israel,	40
Oppression by the Midianites,	7
Gideon, and rest,	40
Abimelech,	3
Tola,	23
Jair,	22
Eli for forty years,	..
Then : In the East.	In the West.
Oppression by the Ammonites, 18 years : 1134-1116,	{ By the Philistines, 40
Jephthah, 6 years : 1116-1110,	{ Loss of the Ark, ..
	{ Samson's deeds, ..
	{ Samnel as a prophet, ..
Ibzan, 7 years : 1110-1103,	Samuel judge, . 19
Elon, 10 years : 1103-1093,	Saul king, . . . 20
Abdon, 8 years : 1093-1085,	David at Hebron, 7
	David at Jerusalem, 33
	Solomon to the building of Temple, 3
Total,	480 years —Keil.

(See O. T., Vol. 1, pp. 61-66.)

Section 202.

DIVINE COMMISSION TO JOSHUA.

JOSHUA 1 : 1-9.

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spake unto
2 Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead ; now therefore arise, go
over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the
3 children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given
4 it, as I spake unto Moses. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river,
the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down
5 of the sun, shall be your border. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the
days of thy life : as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee : I will not fail thee, nor forsake
6 thee. Be strong and of a good courage : for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land
7 which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe

to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee : turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein : for then 9 thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee ? Be strong and of a good courage ; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed : for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

At the outset, it is earnestly recommended that every reader of these volumes, before giving attention to the comment, will very carefully read the text, so as accurately to note and clearly to apprehend the several details of thought or fact. In that way alone can the worth and helpfulness of the comment be fully realized, as in that way alone, every section of this entire work has been prepared. B.

Here begins the second division of the Hebrew Bible,—the earlier Prophets, comprising the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The Book of Joshua has fine characteristics as a history, and is, moreover, very rich in Christian suggestion. Like the Books of Moses, it is free from any hero-worship, or glorying in man ; but Joshua, whether the author of the book or no, is throughout the chief figure—the narrative opening with his installation to office, and closing with his death. This Joshua was a prince of the tribe of Ephraim, born in Egypt, and selected by Moses as his attendant or adjutant-general in the host of Israel. Like the great leader he had been most carefully trained and proved for his lofty enterprise, and entered on his command apparently about the same age as his predecessor,—at or about eighty years. He filled his post for nearly thirty years, and died at the ripe age of one hundred and ten. He exhibited throughout the very mind of Moses,—the same loyalty to God, love to Israel, and personal disinterestedness, taking nothing for himself, his private enrichment, or family promotion, but seeking the good of all Israel, and finding his own joy in their obedience and prosperity. D. F.

The Book of Joshua describes the history of the theocracy under the presidency of Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua had previously been the servant of Moses, and was appointed by the Lord to be his successor, and to bring his work to completion by leading the people of Israel into Canaan, the land promised to their fathers. The book commences, therefore, with the issue of a divine command to Joshua after the death of Moses, to enter upon the office, to which he had already been appointed. The design of the writer was to furnish historical evidence that

Joshua by the help of God faithfully performed the work to which the Lord had called him ; and by the side of that to show how in fulfilment of the promises which He gave to the patriarchs God drove out the Canaanites before Israel, and gave their land to the twelve tribes of Jacob for a permanent inheritance. Hence notwithstanding the close connection between this book and the Pentateuch, it is in itself a complete and independent work, being the historical record of the conquest and distribution of the land, which the Lord gave to his chosen people as their possession, that they might dwell therein, serving their God and Lord in truth and love. *Keil.*

The name of Joshua is given to this book because without doubt the greater part of it was written by him. The division of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel occupies a large portion of the book ; and an accurate and authentic description of the territory of each was requisite for the prevention of disputes. No one could be better qualified to furnish these than Joshua himself. C. G. B.

The Book of Joshua has been divided into three sections : the conquest of Canaan (chs. 1–12) ; the division of the land (chs. 13–22) ; while chs. 23, 24, are devoted to a statement concerning the closing days of the soldier Joshua. The main action of the book comprises a period of twenty-five years. J. P. (See p. 25.)

The history of Israel as a nation may be said to commence with their entrance into their own land. All previous to this—from the Paschal night on which Israel was born as a people to the overthrow of Sihon and of Og, the last who would have barred Israel's way to their home—had been only preparatory. But now, when the Lion of Judah couched by the banks of Jordan, Israel was face to face with its grand mission, and the grand task of its national life commenced : to dispossess heathenism, and to plant in its stead the kingdom of God, which was destined to strike root and to grow, till in the fulness of time it would extend to all nations of the world. The history records, first, certain events which had to take place immediately before entering the Land of Promise ; next, the conquest, and then the apportionment of the

land among the tribes of Israel ; and, lastly, in the time of the Judges, side by side, the unfolding of Israel's religious and national condition, and the assertion of those fundamental principles which underlay its very existence as a God-called people. These principles are :—The special relationship of Israel as the people of God toward Jehovah, and Jehovah's special dealings toward them as their King. The history of the wilderness period had, indeed, been shaped by this twofold relationship, but its consequences appeared more clearly under Joshua, and most fully in the time of the Judges. When not only Moses, but Joshua, and even the elders who had been his contemporaries had passed away, the people, now settled in the land, were left free to develop those tendencies which had all along existed. Then ensued that alternation of national apostacy and judgment, and of penitent return to God and deliverance, which constitutes the framework on which the Book of Judges is constructed. The Books of Joshua and the Judges give, not a chronicle of the nation, but a history of the Kingdom of God in Israel. This explains certain peculiarities of form and style. There are evidently large blanks left in the history of the times ; while some events or reigns of considerable duration are only cursorily mentioned, very detailed and circumstantial narratives are given of persons and occurrences which only occupied the scene for a comparatively short period. But as the writers of these books must have had at command ample material for a full history, we conclude that the selection, Divinely guided, was made in accordance with the "Spirit of Prophecy," to mark the progress of the Kingdom of God in connection with Israel. The more fully these narratives are studied, the more luminous will they become ; the more will their Divine meaning appear ; and the more will they carry to the mind conviction of their truthfulness, and to the heart lessons of their spiritual import. A. E.

1. Now it came to pass after the death of Moses. The opening word is literally "and ;" though a new section of the history here begins, it is a direct continuation of what preceded. The situation is precisely that with which the Book of Deuteronomy ended. Israel is encamped in the plains of Moab, in near proximity to the Jordan. Their great leader has just died, and the thirty days of mourning for him are ended. They were not allowed to spend their time further in grief and inaction. A task lay before them demanding their full energy and activity, if they were really

to possess themselves of that land to the borders of which Moses had brought them. W. H. G.

The faithful Covenant-God was with Joshua, as he waited expectantly, in that mourning camp of Abel-Shittim, for a fresh message from God. Though he had been previously designated by God and set apart to the leadership, it was well he should so wait, not only for his own sake, but also "that the people might afterward not hesitate gladly to follow his leadership who had not moved a foot without the leading of God." And in due time the longed-for direction came : not in doubtful language, but renewing alike the commission of Joshua and the promises to Israel. A. E.

Moses the servant of the Lord. A high and honorable title, applied with reference to the peculiar *nature of the service* in which Moses was employed, viz., that of a minister, mediator, deputy, or vicegerent of God, the honored organ through whom he communicated his will to his chosen people and managed all their varied interests. It is in this character that he stands so highly commended in the sacred volume, having received the divine testimony to his being "found faithful in all God's house *as a servant*," and being expressly distinguished by this title, not only here, where God himself is pleased so to denominate him (verse 2), but also in Rev. 15 : 3, where it is said of the company standing upon the sea of glass, that they "sing the song of Moses *the servant of God*." Bush.

The Lord spake. Jehovah alone was king. Moses claimed no rank or title, demanded no observance, assumed no authority as for himself, but always appears only as the mouth-piece through whom the God of their fathers spake to the people. The whole scheme of government, the ordinances and laws and the selection of the men by whom these were to be administered, emanated directly from Jehovah speaking through the mouth of Moses. In this way, too, the succession to the leadership of the people, after the death of him who was, humanly speaking, their great deliverer, guide, legislator, and judge, was to be provided for ;—not through election by the people ; not by hereditary descent, so as to pass to the children of Moses ; but by the favor of the Lord attending all the enterprises, and crowning with success all the undertakings, of the valiant and righteous man, who, inspired by Jehovah, should step forward to assume the vacant place. F. Bowen.

Joshua the son of Nun. His original name was Hoshea or Oshea, which Moses changed into Jehoshua (Nu. 13 : 16), and by

contraction, Joshua or Jeshua, or Jesus (according to the Greek pronunciation), (Acts 7 : 45 ; Heb. 4 : 8), signifying "Saviour." He therefore was a type of Christ both in his name and in his actions, as well as Moses. The first notice of him is on the occasion of the Amalekite war (Ex. 17 : 9), where he was appointed captain of a chosen party to repel their attack, at which time he was about forty-four years of age and was called a young man (Ex. 33 : 11). Even then he was pre-ordained by the Lord to put the Israelites in possession of the promised land, as appears from the injunction to Moses to record in a book the aggression of the Amalekites and the decree of their extermination, and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua as a memorial to him and the future judges (Ex. 17 : 14). The Lord appointed him to succeed Moses at Nu. 27 : 18. Joshua was about the age of eighty-four, when after Moses' death he was commanded to pass over Jordan and take possession of the promised land. *Hales.*

He had grown up to mature age in the state of Egyptian bondage ; he had shared the experience and trials of the wilderness, as the chosen servant of Moses ; he had proved his military capacity at Rephidim and in the conquest of the land east of Jordan ; and his steadfast obedience at Kadesh, when he stood alone with Caleb, "faithful among the faithless ;" and he lived for about twenty-five years more to finish his allotted work. These three periods of his life thus embrace the whole history of the moulding of the nation from its state of hopeless bondage, when Moses fled to Midian, till God "brought them in and planted them in the mountain of his inheritance." His character was in accordance with his career : a devout warrior, blameless and fearless, who has been taught by serving as a youth how to command as a man ; who earns by manly vigor a quiet, honored old age ; who combines strength with gentleness, ever looking up for and obeying the Divine impulse with the simplicity of a child, while he wields great power, and directs it calmly and without swerving, to the accomplishment of a high unselfish purpose. He is one of the very few worthies of the Old Testament on whose character there is no stain, though his history is recorded with unusual fulness. *P. S.*

The character of Joshua is, confessedly, one of the grandest and most spotless in the whole Bible. The greatness of the man is indeed to some extent overshadowed by the greatness of the events through which he moved : we know him more as a conqueror than as a man. He is one of the very few personages of Holy Writ of

whom no evil is recorded. Free from all desire of self-aggrandizement or lust of gain, no taint of selfishness mars the simple nobility of Joshua's character. In whatever circumstances we find him placed, his one desire is to know what the will of God is, and his one resolve to do it at all costs. Of him, as of his true heart-brother Caleb, the unerring verdict of the Word of Truth is, "He wholly followed the Lord" (Nu. 32 : 12). Who, then, was more worthy to be the first bearer of that "Name which is above every name," which in fulness of time was to be the human designation of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," Jesus, the Captain of His people's salvation in their conflict for the heavenly Canaan ? It is as a warrior that Joshua is first presented to us, and this is the character he chiefly maintains throughout the Scripture record. His gifts and virtues are those of the warrior. Dauntless courage, indomitable perseverance, cheerful confidence in the face of difficulties, promptitude of action, high honor, unselfish disregard of his own interests, unswerving rectitude, care for the interests of those committed to him—all built upon and based in faith in the Living God. *E. V.*

2. Now therefore arise. *Though* Moses is dead the work must go on, therefore arise and go about it. When God has work to do, he will either find or make instruments fit to carry it on. Moses the *servant* is dead, but God the *Master* is not, he lives forever. *H.*

Moses dies, but God lives. The same plan must go forward, but by other hands. The same methods are used. God speaks to Joshua as to Moses, renews the promise, defines the limits of Canaan, and lays down the imperious necessity of exactest obedience. *Warren.*—The rod may drop from the hand of Moses ; but God keeps firm hold of Joshua, and, whoever fails Israel, its God will not. That is the true lesson which we are all meant to learn from the inroads of death on church and home. The perishing of the perishable is to teach the abiding of the immortal. Dying men reveal a living God. *A. M.*

The host of Israel was still on the eastern side of Jordan. The first step in the fulfilment of Joshua's commission was to carry the people over that river : "Arise," is God's first word to him, "go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them." The command does not seem to have been accompanied with any intimation of the manner in which the river, then at its full, was to be crossed. But Joshua had long since

learned that whatever God enjoins he renders possible to those who in simple faith seek to obey. If He bade Israel go over the river, the way to do so would be opened when they set themselves to do his bidding. E. V.

The grant of the land of Canaan to the children of Israel is here repeated (verse 2), *I do give it them*. To the patriarchs it was *promised, I will give it*, but now that the fourth generation was expired the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and the time was come for the performance of the promise, it is actually conveyed, and they are put in possession of that which they had long been in expectation of, "I do give it, enter upon it, it is all your own, nay (verse 3), *I have given it*; though it be yet unconquered, it is as sure to you as if it were in your hands." H.

The possession of Canaan by the Israelites is constantly set forth as a free gift of the Divine favor, by which all ideas of human right are completely excluded. But while the donation of this land was an act of the Lord's free favor to the Israelites, the taking it away from the Canaanites was no less an act of his retributive justice—of such justice as it behooved the moral governor of the world to administer against a people laden with iniquity. Gen. 15 : 13–16 proves this clearly. When the time was fully come, the Canaanites became a doomed people—doomed to expulsion or extermination by the Israelites, to whom was committed the sword of judgment, and who were the destined inheritors of the land of which the Canaanites had proved themselves unworthy. So, too, the Israelites, favored as they were for their father's sake, were warned that even they held the land by no other tenure than that which the Canaanites were to be destroyed for infringing. Over and over again were they warned that if they fell into the same dreadful transgressions for which the Canaanites had been cast out, they would subject themselves to the same doom—be like them destroyed—like them cast out of the good land which they had defiled. We are not left altogether in the dark as to the nature of the abominations which pervaded the land, and which cried to God to show himself as abhorring iniquity and to prove that the world was not left fatherless of his care. *Kit*.

3. As I said unto Moses. The words here used are a literal repetition of the promise made (De. 11 : 24). Indeed, nearly every sentence in this address to Joshua occurs somewhere in the course of the foregoing history, especially in the Book of Deuteronomy.

4. From the wilderness, etc. God here proceeds, in very brief terms, to mark out

and define the boundaries of the land of promise. Its utmost limits should be from the wilderness of Sin, or the desert of Arabia Petræa on the South, to Lebanon on the North; and from the Euphrates on the East, to the great sea, or the Mediterranean, on the West. The Israelites did not indeed possess the full extent of this grant till the time of David, but their failure to do so was owing entirely to their own remissness, unbelief, and disobedience, as was every reverse with which they met during the whole period of their history. They were not straitened in God, but in themselves; and the same remark holds good with regard to his people in all ages. *This Lebanon*. Particularized in this manner, because it could doubtless be seen from the spot where Joshua now stood, rearing its lofty summits toward the clouds in the northern extremity of Canaan. The name "Lebanon" comes from the Heb. root *Laban*, *while*, from its summits being covered with snow. *Bush*.

5. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. The presence of God should never be withdrawn from him. Moses had assured him of this (De. 31 : 8), that though *he* must now leave him, *God* never would; and here God himself confirms that word of his servant Moses, and engages never to leave Joshua. This we may be sure of, that *the Lord is with us while we are with him*. This promise here made to Joshua is applied to all believers, and improved as an argument against covetousness (Heb. 13 : 5). H.

That gracious promise in the Epistle to the Hebrews—"It is written—I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," originally appears in the Bible as a promise to Joshua alone, in his peculiar and special circumstances as leader of the Lord's people; yet we find it applied by the Apostle in a wide sense to the whole body of believers. Applications of Scripture of this kind, when regulated by strict regard to the proportion of faith, are exceedingly effective and consolatory, opening up to the mind a sudden view of the infinite power and depth of meaning of the Word of God. *Cameron*.

What God promises to any one of the Old Testament saints he promises to every believer, with such modification as suits his particular case. For all these promises are different leaves of the same tree of life, different expressions of the same covenant of grace. In this sense, whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through scriptural patience and comfort might have hope. It is in this way that thousands of believers have drunk at the same fountain; and what

God said to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been the refreshment of many souls in all generations. In the Greek these few words contain no less than five negatives ; to give the full force of which we should have to read it thus : " I will never, never leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee." The precious truth therefore which I commend to you for all coming years, is this : God engages in covenant, to be with the believer, for all needful good, now, henceforth, and forever. J. W. A.

6. Be strong. The word is a command. It implies that the choice between strength and weakness, and therefore the responsibility for the choice, is ours. The servant of God is in duty bound to strive to make his life on the earth the largest possible success ; he must, therefore, lose no righteous opportunity to be strong. He has no right to any selfish indulgence that weakens any physical or mental power. Moreover, he must study all the sources and elements of strength. " Knowledge is power," and " in union is strength." Organization, discipline, self-command, skill, all these are strength ; and the command is " be strong." *Cable.*—**And of a good courage.** There is animal courage and there is moral courage. And although the strength and courage which men share with the lower animals are not to be despised, but sought after in their degree, yet it is to the nobler qualities the text chiefly refers when it says, " Be strong and of a good courage." God gave this word of good cheer to Joshua, and repeated it thrice over, so that he might never forget it. Joshua and his men needed it, or God would not have said it to him thrice so earnestly. *Stalker.*

To be " strong" is to take up a certain position in practical obedience and say clearly, " I am here : I stand by this." To be " of good courage" is to maintain that position against the force of temptation and opposition of every kind. Strength and courage are needed at home and *with ourselves* before we meet the world at all. The critical part of the struggle is within. Strength and courage are needed when we go more fully out into the world. We need courage to live honestly, courage to live simply, courage to *speak* frankly and boldly in condemnation of the speech or the action of others. We have in the context direction how we may attain this temper and habit of Christian courage. It is fed by truth, by the law or the revealed truth of God. When the soul has found the flowing fountains of strength, and drinks of the same day by day, her courage will be day by day renewed. *Raleigh.*

All the land of the Hittites. The Biblical narrative indicates that while other Canaanitish tribes were of small power and importance, and were soon exterminated or absorbed into the Hebrew nationality, the Hittites stood on altogether another footing. The Hittites are the first and the last of these tribes to appear on the scene. As early as the time of Abraham we find them lords of the soil at Hebron ; and in the time of Solomon, and even of Elisha, they are a mighty people, inhabiting a region to the north of Palestine, and distinguished by the possession of numerous war chariots, then the chief sign of military power. Though we are now able to perceive that this is the true signification of the references to them in the Old Testament, yet it was from the newly recovered monuments of Egypt and Assyria that the facts were actually gleaned. I. T.—Since the decipherment of the Egyptian and the Assyrian monuments it has become clear that the Bible is right and the too sceptical scholars were wrong. Seventeen centuries before Christ, Egypt knew the might of the great Hittite people. Nineteen centuries before Christ, Assyria had to do battle against the power of the Hittites. The records of Egypt and Assyria, read together, show the Hittites a strong and warlike power, occupying the very region laid down for it, incidentally, in the Bible narrative. And now, during the last twelve years, the monuments of these Hittites are being found, dotted here and there over the vast stretch between the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the river Euphrates. S. S. T.

The gift had its limitations, but it had also its conditions. It must not only be conquered, but occupied. The offending nations then in possession must be driven out, and the land be held by constancy and courage. The conditions were never wholly accepted by the beneficiaries. The possible boundaries were never reached in actual dominion, and the " soles of their feet" (from sloth and faint-heartedness and long-continued disobedience) failed to tread upon the whole of the promised possession. Herein is suggested a plain rule for our every-day life. All the bounties of nature, all the wealth of production possible to industry and cunning invention, all that can fill the hands or enrich the mind, is offered to man on similar terms. It is not his by ancestral bequest, nor by the law of might, but it is given from the hands of a bountiful Benefactor. Like the gift to the Israelites it has its limitations. The snow-clad Lebanon and the wilderness, the great river and the shores of the sea, restrict all human acquisi-

tions, mental or material. Every man has his sphere which he may not exceed, but within which all may be claimed as his own. And all the gifts have the same condition. The wisdom of the ages, the secrets of nature, the problems whose solution is the rich garniture of the soul, although freely offered from the Divine hand, and thus in every sense a Divine gift, must be conquered and occupied to become available. Here are the treasures of learning freely tendered, but the sluggard receives no mental impression from them. The gift cannot be received except on the one condition. The unwearied diligence is the cup into which it is poured; the assiduous application builds up the storehouse in which it may be garnered. Conquest and occupation are essential to every man's possession. And it is the same with material things. God gives the harvest, but the earth is dumb to man's plea for bread until he turns the furrow, and sows the seed, and thrusts in the sickle, and thrashes out the golden grain, and winnows it from the chaff, and grinds it into flour, and bakes it to his taste. The man who stands invoking the blessing with gaping mouth will waste his eloquence if he refuses to bend his back and blister his hands. Even in Paradise the first pair of the race had to dress and keep the garden that gave them its fruits, and though their offspring have been sustained by the Divine bounty ever since, they have enjoyed it only in the sweat of their face. The great mistake of the world, that which brings to grief and want so many of the children of men, is that they hold out their hands for the prize they covet, with little thought of the condition on which depends their enjoyment of the gift. This is one reason why genius so often fails where a dull intellect succeeds. The former holds his head aloft and looks for the gift of wisdom to come by intuition. The latter masters the alphabet and never dreams of a royal road to learning. How many a young man is waiting for an inheritance of wisdom or wealth to come to him, as the gifts do in a fairy story, from some unknown source. His hands are stretched out with upturned fingers as if the heavens were a full storehouse ready to drop blessings into every itching palm. And even where the promised possession is obtained the sluggard who will not exterminate the evils he dreads, and tread under the soles of his feet his besetting sins, will come far short of the possible boundary of noble living. *Behrends.*

7, 8. Joshua must not only govern by law and take care that the people observe the law, but he must observe it himself, and so by his

own example maintain the honor and power of it. He must *do* what was written; do *according* to what was written, exactly observing the law as his copy, and doing, not only that which was there required, but in all circumstances according to the appointment. He must do according to *all* that was written, without exception or reserve. And to encourage him in his obedience, God assures him that then he shall *do wisely* (as it is in the margin), and *make his way prosperous*. They that make the Word of God their rule and conscientiously walk by that rule, shall both do well and speed well; it will furnish them with the best maxims by which to order their conversation (Ps. 111 : 10). And it will entitle them to the best blessings; God shall *give them the desire of their heart*. H.

In nothing is there more scope for the display of the highest moral heroism than in daring, in all circumstances, to cleave steadfastly to the Word of God as the rule of our conduct. As the soldier of an earthly leader is to act in all things according to certain rules, laid down in a code drawn up for the purpose, so the Christian soldier has his code drawn up for him by God himself, and revealed to him in the oracles of truth. This code he is to study with all diligence, and meditate on it day and night, that he may conform himself to it in every particular, and never turn aside to the right hand or the left. However difficult or self-denying its injunctions, he must obey it, and so sacred must it be in his eyes, that he will rather die than depart from it. *Bush.*

This word, "all the law," has a warning value on one hand to the easy conscience that would satisfy itself with obedience to mere statute laws and religious forms; and on the other to the morbid conscience that cannot consent to any legislation in Church or State which does not fulfil the Ten Commandments at a bound. Not "all the law which Moses commanded" did so. But "all the law" did this: It set the moral ideal up in perpetual view, and made all lower legislation, all laws and ordinances of imperfect State or Church, point faithfully and lead strongly and very courageously always toward that ideal. Under God's hand Moses did not legislate down on the plane of the people's caprice, though his brother once did; but he did legislate down on the plane of their capabilities, yet always up toward the Ten Commandments. *Cable.*

It is profitable for instruction (or teaching in the things of God), *for conviction* (or reproof), *for correction*, *for discipline in righteousness*; that is, for such a moral training as will lead those who

submit to it to live in righteousness. All this, be it observed, is affirmed of the Old Testament Scriptures, even after the fuller light of the Gospel had come. They have such uses still to fulfil to the church of Christ. P. F.

A sufficient rule of guidance for life Joshua had ; we have. There was a law of God then by the keeping of which he and all his people might approve themselves to the Lord, and be strong men and heroes. There is a law of God now, fuller, richer, more spiritual, more complete, in the keeping of which we may approve ourselves to the Master, Christ. Raleigh.

Propose me anything out of this book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this, God hath said so, therefore it is true. I am fully assured that God does not and therefore that men ought not to require any more of any man than this, to believe the Scripture to be God's Word, to endeavour to finde the true sense of it, and to live according to it. Chillingworth.

This is a Book, whose instructions are true, whose precepts are all good, and whose promises are happie ; for 'tis the Word of God, who is the truth, goodness and happiness it selfe. This is a glasse, in which I see my selfe in a three-fold estate of innocence, corruption and regeneration. This is againe a glasse, in which I see both my selfe and all things in three different times, past, present and future. The first concerns me not, the second is but a moment, the last is perpetuall. Yet time past gives me instructions, to order the present ; this workes for the future, and this future shall be happie or unhappie, as the present makes it. Herbert.

8. Shall not depart out of thy mouth. Thou shalt constantly read and ponder it, it shall incessantly employ thy lips, thou shalt have thy heart so imbued with its letter and spirit, that thy mouth shall, as it were, overflow with its rich contents, as "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The same phrase occurs but once elsewhere in the Scriptures (Is. 59 : 21), where it is implied that the covenant promise should be deemed so precious, that it should be a perpetual theme of meditation and discourse. **Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** This is the character of the good man as described by the Psalmist (Ps. 1 : 2), in words which are almost an exact transcript of those here employed. The Heb. term for "meditate" implies that kind of mental rumination

which is apt to vent itself in an *audible sound* of the voice. Bush.

The meditation which is enjoined is the study of God's Word for a purely practical purpose, to find out what sort of men we ought to be and what are the great laws for conduct and conflict. That sort of meditation is very unlike the half-asleep sentimental brooding which has usurped the name. It is essential to all vigorous Christian life ; but it is wofully unfashionable nowadays, when people have so many newspapers and magazines to read that the Bible gets scant attention. If there is one thing more than another which should invigorate the feeble Christianity so common to-day, it is the earnest, systematic study of Scripture as the all-sufficient guide of morals for men and nations, both in the conflicts of the individual soul and in the great warfare against iniquity, to which Christ summons all his servants. A. M.—A man will never grow into the knowledge of God's Word by idly waiting for some new gift of discernment, but by diligently using that which God has already bestowed upon him, and using at the same time all other helps that lie within his reach. Above all, let us give our whole mind in patient, loving study to the book itself ; and where we fail, at any essential part, God will either send his evangelist Philip to our aid (Acts 8) or instruct us himself. But it is only to patient, loving meditation that help is given. God could have poured all knowledge into us by easy inspiration ; but it is by earnest search alone that it can become the treasure of the soul. Ker.

We cleave to Christ by habitual contemplation. There can be no real continuous closeness of intercourse with Him, except by thought ever recurring to Him amidst all the tumult of our busy days. There is a mood of mind in which to approach our Lord—a mood sadly unfamiliar in these days, when poor Mary has hardly a chance of a reputation for "usefulness" by the side of busy, bustling Martha—that still contemplation of the truth, with the view of bringing our own souls more completely under its influence, and saturating our being with its fragrance. We are all so occupied arguing and deducing and elaborating, that we have no time for retired still contemplation, and, therefore, lose the finest aroma of the truth we profess to believe. There are few things more needed by our modern Religion than the old exhortation, "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee." And when the great truths embodied in Him stand clear before us, then let us remember that we have not

done with them when we have *seen* them. Next must come into exercise the moral side of faith, the voluntary act of trust, the casting ourselves on Him whom we behold, the making our own of the blessings which He holds out to us. A. M.

Store your mind with God's own truth. This supplies the vital sap of the soul. Let every fibre of your spirit drink it in, and you shall grow in grace and knowledge at once. "There is but one book," said the dying novelist, when he was asked what he would hear read. There is but one book that is full of God, or which can fill us with all His fulness. Read it. Ponder it. Not Plato or Bacon, or Addison, but He that spake as never man spake—speaks there. Go up with Him to the mount, and hear His sermon. Sit with Him at the table and listen to His words. Walk with Him in the fields and read His paragraphs syllabled in flowers, and tares and fig-trees. Take David's harp and sweep its strings to the music, "The Lord is my shepherd." Sit at Isaiah's feet and bow and adore, while he unveils the glorious greatness of Him "who weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." . . . God's utterance through the pens of all the inspired writers is like the breath of spring to winter's blasted herbage. The soul freshens and blooms under it, and he that bears the best and noblest fruit of a devoted Christian life is he that is most devoutly conversant with the Divine word. *Gillett.*

The Book of God, when it is the one book, makes strong characters. Read it, study it, ponder over it; be not content to go over so much daily as a task, or to snatch a passage in the hurry of an odd moment; but lay yourself out to accomplish a thorough investigation of its contents, to acquaint yourself with its order, structure, and harmony, to grapple with its difficulties, to systematize its truths, and to enrich your memory with its golden sentences. Men, men, who can stand fast in the faith, who can stand alone, who have vertebral columns, who can bear, who can forbear, who can advance, who on due summons can strike, men armed with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left—that is, with sword and shield, are bred in great study of God's Word, and great familiarity with those high evangelic truths which are the motive powers of the spiritual universe. The most intense heat, and consequently the most powerful action, proceed from deep inward conviction of religious truth, derived from laborious study of the Scripture. J. W. A.

6-9. The threefold admonition to "be strong and of a good courage" is supported by three different assurances on the part of God. In verse 6 it is supported by the assurance that God would fulfil his promise to the fathers,—in other words, of God's covenant faithfulness; in verses 7 and 8 it is more clearly defined as within the lines of obedience to the law to which assuredly the promise was attached; while in verse 9 the fact that God had commanded is emphasized, and the promise of individual and personal help to Joshua attached to courageous and hearty action which God had enjoined. We mark the successive order of the grounds on which God's assurance of help rests: first, his faithfulness to his covenant; secondly, our duty, and the promise which God has certainly attached to the discharge of duty; thirdly, individual faith and obedience which has a personal and individual promise of help. This, then, is the order in our grounds of confidence: God's covenant, God's promise, and God's presence. Life, specially opening life, should be viewed in the light of this history. To each of us comes the divine direction. Work—all work—is to take possession in his name of what he assigns to us. What each of us most needs, what in these verses is thrice repeated, is to be of good courage, by which we understand a courage which is the outcome of faith. It comprises three elements. First, we are to go whither God directs us: we are not to be swayed by worldly and selfish motives, not to be inclined hither or thither by every passing wind, whether of passion, inclination, pleasure, or seeming advantage. In short, ours is to be a straightforward, simple, firm, initial resolution to occupy in our lives God's portion. The second element is that in the shaping of our lives we are to be guided by the word and will of God. There must be a holy determination in that respect, and a holy perseverance in carrying it out. It needs courage to do the will of God in this world: courage not to swerve from it to the right or the left,—good courage in our open profession of adherence to the will of God; a hearty courage which springs from loving meditation upon his word and will. Such a way will surely be "prosperous" in the highest and only true sense of prosperity. The third element in such courage is a constant looking up to God, a daily walk as seeing him who is invisible. Thus we have holy resolution, or consecration at the outset; holy determination, or a careful observance of the will of God; and holy fellowship, or joyous communion with God. To the first of those attaches the cove-

nant-promise of the Father ; to the second, the promise of Christ to them that take up his cross and follow him ; and to the third, the promise of the Holy Ghost, whereby we cry “ Abba, Father ! ” A. E.

9. Have I not commanded thee ? Every command of God carries with it the prophecy and assurance of ability to fulfil it, if heart and will are obediently responsive. Here, as most frequently, the promise of the Divine presence and help immediately follows the com-

mand. *The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest !* B.

All the after life of Joshua is the carrying out with a remarkable simplicity of unquestioning faith this first charge of his God. His obedience is immediate. The days of waiting are passed. There is no more sign of doubt or of misgiving. At once he assumes in all its breadth the office so committed to his hands, and as God's viceroy “ commands the officers of the people ” (Josh. 1 : 10). *Wilberforce.*

Section 203.

SENDING OF SPIES TO JERICHO. THEIR RECEPTION AND PROTECTION BY RAHAB. RETURN AND REPORT.

JOSHUA 2 : 1-24.

1 AND Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men as spies secretly, saying, Go view the land, and Jericho. And they went, and came into the house of an harlot whose name was
2 Rahab, and lay there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men
3 in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the land. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into
4 thine house : for they be come to search out all the land. And the woman took the two men, and hid them ; and she said, Yea, the men came unto me, but I wist not whence they were :
5 and it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out : whither the men went I wot not : pursue after them quickly ; for ye shall overtake
6 them. But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which
7 she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords : and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.
8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof ; and she said unto
9 the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that the fear of you is fallen
10 upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came out of Egypt ; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, unto Sihon and to
11 Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard it, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man, because of you : for the LORD your God,
12 he is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that ye also will deal kindly with my father's
13 house, and give me a true token : and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and will deliver our lives from death.
14 And the men said unto her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business ; and it shall
15 be, when the LORD giveth us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a cord through the window : for her house was upon the town wall, and she
16 dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers light upon you ; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned : and
17 afterward may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, We will be guiltless of this thine
18 oath which thou hast made us to swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by : and thou shalt gather unto thee into the house thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy
19 father's household. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless : and whosoever shall

20 be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. But if thou utter this our business, then we will be guiltless of thine oath which thou hast made us 21 to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and 22 they departed : and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned : and the pursuers 23 sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. Then the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun ; and they 24 told him all that had befallen them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land ; and moreover all the inhabitants of the land do melt away before us.

The command to cross the Jordan involved a direction to make all necessary preparations for that event. Accordingly, instead of enjoining Israel instantly to strike their tents, Joshua turns his attention to providing needful supplies and obtaining the requisite information. The immediate presence of God with them, and the miraculous aid promised them and actually afforded in the crossing of the Jordan, did not lead him to neglect such measures as a wise and prudent leader would take under ordinary circumstances. God lends his succor as it is needed and to the extent that it is needed. W. H. G.

There was something to be done before Joshua took Israel over the river. The crossing of Jordan was the end of their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, but it was the beginning of the conflict which was to put them in possession of Canaan ; and this conflict was likely to be a severe one. The Lord had promised to fight for them ; but they would none the less have to fight. The fulfilment of God's promise was conditional on their own performances. Jericho, the key of Western Palestine, would oppose the first obstacle to the onward march of Israel. Future success or failure would mainly depend on the result of their operations there. As a wise, far-sighted general, therefore, does Joshua, as a first step, send two spies to reconnoitre the strength of this city. E. V.

Joshua himself was full of God's Spirit and had the oracle of God ready for his direction ; yet now he goes not to the propitiatory for consultation but to the spies. Except where ordinary means fail us, we may not appeal to the immediate help of God. It was promised Joshua that he should lead Israel into the promised land ; yet he knew that the condition of his provident care was included in that assurance of success. Heaven is promised to us, but not to our carelessness. He that hath set this blessed inheritance before us presupposes our wisdom, faith, holiness. Bp. II.

Jericho was the most important town in the Jordan valley. Not only was it conspicuous

among the other Canaanitish towns for its walls and gates, and its rich temple filled with gold, silver, iron, brass, and even Mesopotamian drapery, but its situation was such as must always have rendered its occupation necessary to any invader from that quarter. It was the key of Western Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains. From the issues of the torrent of the Kelt on the south to the copious spring, afterward called "the fountain of Elisha," on the north, the ancient city ran along the base of the mountains, and thus commanded the oasis of the desert valley, the garden or park of verdure, which clustering round these waters has, through the various stages of its long existence, secured its prosperity and grandeur. Behind the city rose the jagged range of the white limestone mountains of Judæa, here presenting one of the few varied and beautiful outlines that can be seen among the southern hills of Palestine. This range is "the mountain" to which the spies fled while their pursuers vainly sought them on the way to the Jordan. A. P. S.

2. It is to be remembered that Rahab lived in the midst of a people, corrupt, abandoned, and profligate to the last degree. Vices of the most enormous and debasing character were practised without reserve, and received the sanction of every class of people. As these sins pervaded all ranks they would cease to be regarded as infamous, and the term applied to Rahab does not indicate a character below the ordinary standard. Bush.

An attempt has been made to soften the word by which this woman is designated into that of *hostess* or *innkeeper*. But there is no authority either in Hebrew or Greek for such an usage. Enough for us to know, however disreputable her life may have been in former times, she came afterward to occupy an honored place among the saints of God. Twice is she referred to in the New Testament for the excellency of her faith. Once by the Apostle Paul, and again by the Apostle James. Sin is no bar to the mercy of God, or to the favors of Providence, if

it be repented of, with "fruits meet for repentance." *W. Adams.*

4. Hid them. This is justly celebrated by the apostle as an instance of high and heroic faith (Heb. 11 : 31). So strong was her persuasion of the truth of what had been announced to her, so fully was she convinced from what she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel that their God was the only true God, and consequently that his declared purpose in regard to Canaan would surely come to pass, that she ventures her life upon her faith. She knew that harboring them was exposing herself to the death of a traitor to her country, and yet she runs the risk. *Bush.*—She contemns her life for the present, that she may save it for the future ; neglected her own king and country, for strangers which she never saw ; and more feared the destruction of that city before it knew that it had an enemy, than the displeasure and mortal revenge of her king. *Bp. H.*

5. And now her tongue hides them no less than her hand : her charity was good, her excuse was not good. *Evil may not be done that good may come of it :* we may do anything but sin for promoting a good cause ; and if not in main occasions, how shall God take it that we are not dainty of falsehoods in trifles ? *Bp. H.*—To the teaching of Christianity, we owe the feeling—prevalent among all Christian nations—that a falsehood is a disgrace and a sin ; and that a man is bound no less, religiously and morally, by his word than by his oath. All this was unknown to Rahab ; who had probably never heard that there was the least harm in lying—much less when an apparently good end was to be answered by it. These considerations may be fairly urged in extenuation of Rahab's falsehood. God himself claims from us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. In us who have opportunities of better knowledge, untruthfulness must be judged by a different standard here and hereafter. *Kit.*

From the uniform testimony of travellers and missionaries, it is evident that among all heathen nations, particularly those of the East, lying ever has been and still is a practice of universal prevalence, and of the criminality of which they have scarcely any sense. So weak is the feeling of obligation as to the observance of strict veracity, that even apparently sincere converts have the greatest difficulty in freeing themselves from the habit of equivocation, and need to be perpetually admonished on that score. Apart from the above-mentioned consideration, it was a difficult problem to be solved, how she should under the circumstances *act according to her faith.*

She fully believed that what the spies had told her was true. She says not, "I fear," or "I believe," but "*I know*, that the Lord hath given you the land." Was there then any other conceivable mode by which she could *act according to her faith* than by practising an imposition upon the king's officers ? By the very fact of exercising a firm faith in the divine testimony, she did *virtually* throw herself upon the side of Israel and unite her interests with theirs. Henceforth *their* enemies were *hers*. If the Canaanites had no right to demand the truth of Israel, they had no right to demand it of her. If it would have been right for the Israelites to have recourse to a stratagem to mislead an enemy in arms, we see not why it was not equally right for *her*. But that the Israelites often did resort to such expedients in carrying on their wars is beyond question, nor do the Scriptures absolutely condemn them. They are certainly as lawful as war itself is. But whether we justify or condemn her conduct, it can afford no precedent to us. Before we can plead her example in justification of treachery or falsehood, we must be circumstanced as she was. But this it is impossible we ever should be. *Bush.*

However it was in this case, we are sure it is our duty to speak every man the truth to his neighbor, to dread and detest lying, and never to *do that evil that good may come of it*, but God accepts what is sincerely and honestly intended though there be a mixture of frailty and folly in it, and is not extreme to mark what we do amiss. *H.*

6. "She brought them up to the roof of her house, and hid them with the *stalks of flax*"—the stalks of flax no doubt just cut down, which she had spread upon the roof of her house to steep and to season. How very minute is this incident and how casually does it present itself to our notice ! How unimportant a matter it seems under what the spies were hidden ! Enough that it answered the purpose and saved their lives. Could the historian have contemplated for one moment the effect which a trifle about a flax-stalk might have in corroboration of his account of the passage of the Jordan ? Is it possible for the most jealous examiner of human testimony to imagine that these flax-stalks were fixed upon above all things in the world for the covering of the spies, because they were known to be ripe with the barley, and the barley was known to be ripe at the Passover, and the Passover was known to be the season when the Israelites set foot in Canaan ? Rather would he not fairly and candidly confess that in one particular, at least, of this adventure (the

only one which we have an opportunity of checking), a religious attention to truth is manifested. *Blunt.*

He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. As much as to say, "The Lord your God is both omnipotent and omnipresent;" a remarkable confession considering the previous ignorance and darkness of her mind. It was at once an acknowledgment of the true God, and a condemnation of the false gods and idolatrous worship of her countrymen, and showed a supernatural influence of God upon her soul. *Bush.*

The faith of Rahab was a religious faith: it had God for its object. The terror of the Lord had fallen upon her in common with all the people; and she knew that He had given to Israel their land. She believed the report of those great things which had been done for the invaders now upon the borders of their territory; and this belief was ripened with her into a faith that the God of Israel was God in heaven and on earth. Accordingly she perished not: she was rescued from the destruction brought on the families of Jericho—a salvation extended to her kinsfolk; and we have reason to believe that she was made the heir and partaker of a higher salvation in virtue of her faith. *T. C.*

In that *she received the messengers, and sent them out another way*, she did it by faith, such a faith as set her above the fear of man, even of the wrath of the king. She believed, upon the report she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel, that their God was the only true God, and that therefore their declared design upon Canaan would undoubtedly take effect, and in this faith she sided with them, protected them, and courted their favor. Had she said, "I believe God is yours and Canaan yours, but I dare not show you any kindness," her faith had been dead and inactive, and would not have justified her. But by this it appeared to be alive—that she exposed herself to the utmost peril, even of life, in obedience to her faith. Those only are true believers that can find in their hearts to venture for God; and those that by faith take the Lord for their God, take his people for their people and cast in their lot among them. *H.*

Remembering who, and what, and among whom she had been all her life-time, her emphatic confession, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, "He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath;" her unwavering faith in the truth of His promises, which moved her to self-denying action at such danger and sacrifice, and supported her in it; her separation from her countrymen; her conduct toward the spies at

the risk of her life—all show her to have had that faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen;" not a "dead faith," "without works," but one which "wrought with her works, and by works was made perfect." And He who "giveth more grace" to them who wisely use what they have, marvellously owned and blessed this "first-fruits" from among the Gentiles. Her history, which, in all its circumstances, bears a remarkable analogy to that of the woman of Samaria, is recorded for the instruction of the Church. And, as in the case of the Hebrew midwives who had preserved Israel, God also "made her a house." She became the wife of Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, and from her sprang in direct line both David (Ruth 4:21) and David's Lord (Matt. 1:4). *A. E.*

12. Swear unto me by the Lord. This proposal still further displays the sincerity and the strength of her faith. While the people of Israel, with the miracles of the divine power constantly before their eyes, were incessantly prone to stagger at the promises and give way to unbelief, she, upon the mere hearsay report of these wonders, is so firmly persuaded of their truth that she desires to enter covenant with the spies for her own preservation and that of her family. Though *they* were now in perilous circumstances, shut up within the walls of Jericho and surrounded by enemies, yet she treats with them as if they had already stormed the city and had the power of life and death in their hands. *Bush.*

16. She directs them to leave the high road and abscond in the mountains till the pursuers were returned, for till then they could not safely venture over Jordan. Those that are in the way of God and their duty may expect that Providence will protect them, but that will not excuse them from taking all prudent methods for their own safety. God will keep us, but we must not wilfully expose ourselves. Providence must be trusted but not tempted. *H.*

18. That scarlet cord was to be put to another use. After they had been lowered down outside of the city wall, the spies called out to Rahab, "Behold when we come into the land thou shalt bind *this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by*"—and this was to be a sign of security for her and for all her house in the coming days of carnage. *That which she had used for the preservation of the spies, was to be the instrument of her own preservation afterward.* The good which she did to others, by a scarlet cord from her window, was to be abundantly compensated by the self-same and not another scar-

let thread pendent from the very same window. The world is full of wonderful compensations. Many inequalities, many things incomplete, remind us of the necessity of a future judgment and a future redress ; but there are manifold rewards this side of the final Assize. These are sometimes so striking that they have come to be called "poetic justice." There is something like romance in the manner in which good and evil meet with retribution by the reaction of their own instruments. Haman is hung on the same gallows he had erected for Mordecai. The bread cast upon the waters is found again after many days. Favors conferred upon others are returned in blessings upon ourselves. That which we do in the way of honoring God and serving our fellow-men, is made in time and in turn a blessing and comfort and honor to ourselves. Ebed-melech the Ethiopian was kind to Jeremiah when he was shut up in prison, and so Jeremiah was bidden to say to Ebed-melech, in prospect of the city's destruction, "I will surely deliver thee and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee, because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord." *W. Adams.*

Behold, this is the saving color : the destroying angel sees the door-cheeks of the Israelites sprinkled with red and passes them over : the warriors of Israel see the window of Rahab dyed with red, and save her family from the common destruction. If our souls have this tincture of the precious blood of our Saviour, upon our doors or windows, we are safe. But if any one of the brethren of Rahab shall fly from this red flag, and rove about the city, and not contain himself under that roof which hid the spies, it is in vain for him to tell the avengers that he is Rahab's brother : that title will not save him in the street ; within doors it will. If we will

wander out of the limits that God hath set us, we cast ourselves out of his protection ; we cannot challenge the benefit of his gracious preservation and our most precious redemption, when we fly out into the by-ways of our own hearts, not for innocence, but for safety and harbor. The Church is that house of Rahab, which is saved when all Jericho shall perish. While we keep us in the lists thereof we cannot miscarry, through misopinion ; but when once we run out of it, let us look for judgment from God, and error in our own judgment. *Bp. H.*

22. Abode there three days. Not three entire days, but one whole day and part of two others. They were sent out on the sixth day of the month Nisan, and escaped from Jericho the same night. The seventh day they spent in the mountains. On the eighth they returned to the camp. These three days are reckoned in the same manner as the three days of our Lord's burial. *Bush.*—**23, 24.** After they had been concealed for three days in the mountains, they returned and related to Joshua what they had found, and said, "The Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land ; for even all the inhabitants of the land do faint because of us." As this had been prophesied in Ex. 15 : 15 ; 23 : 27 ; De. 11 : 25, and was now fulfilled, the faith of Rahab so much encouraged the men that they understood *still better* the power of their God, and put a filial confidence in his firm purpose to give them the land, and thereby strengthened the faith both of their leader and of his people. *C. G. B.*—These two spies act, as Caleb and Joshua had done thirty-eight years before. They took no note of Jericho's great walls, and of her vigilant king, but of the Lord's preparation for Israel's victory. *Crosby.*

Section 204.

PREPARATION FOR MOVEMENT. CONTINGENT FROM REUBEN, GAD, AND HALF-MANASSEH. ADVANCE TO THE JORDAN.

JOSHUA 1 : 10-18 ; 3 : 1-5.

10, 11 THEN Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people saying, Prepare you victuals ; for within three days ye are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.

12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua,

13 saying, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The
 14 LORD your God giveth you rest, and will give you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and
 your cattle, shall abide in the land which Moses gave you beyond Jordan ; but ye shall pass
 15 over before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valor, and shall help them ; until the
 LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the
 land which the LORD your God giveth them : then ye shall return unto the land of your pos-
 session, and possess it, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond Jordan toward
 16 the sunrising. And they answered Joshua; saying, All that thou hast commanded us we will
 17 do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in
 all things, so will we hearken unto thee : only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with
 18 Moses. Whosoever he be that shall rebel against thy commandment, and shall not hearken
 unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death : only be strong and
 of a good courage.

3 1 And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and they removed from Shittim, and came
 to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel ; and they lodged there before they passed over.
 2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the midst of the camp ;
 3 and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD
 your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go
 4 after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure :
 come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go ; for ye have not passed
 5 this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves : for to-morrow
 the LORD will do wonders among you.

The mission and the man were both under God's hand. Gifted and chosen for great office, Joshua was trained by successive promotion,—minister, confidential aid, lieutenant-general, absolute leader. To this end he was instructed in the presence of Moses, and within the verge of his great experiences ; holding highest converse and highest trust ; going with him farther than any man into the awful splendors that veiled the glory of the Given Law. When the supreme commission came, it found Joshua a man tried and true ; a man of faith—undoubting belief in the word and person with whom he stood in covenant ; conviction of the justice of his cause, and uncompromising loyalty to both ; force of personality, but of that high order which seeks to give out rather than take in, of good. Of his home life the picture is denied to us ; possibly also denied to him. His great work might well absorb all thought and love into the one resolute will. The task laid on him was a great one. It was the consummation of a mighty movement—the migration of a People, the founding of a Nation. It was also the conquest of a most difficult country and of powerful peoples. It was, hardest of all, to take a motley host, two millions of people, with all their encumbrances ; their very numbers a source of weakness ; lately escaped from bondage and with difficulty brought thus far by long and toilsome paths ; through wildernesses and lands of luxury ; through the buffetings of fierce foes and the seductions of their own undisciplined hearts ; ever murmuring, ever prone to suc-

cumb, to falter go back, and march them on to mastery : to make good those years of toil and trial, of battle, betrayal, and despair, with firm hand to make sure the stroke without which all that had been done were worse than in vain.
J. L. Chamberlain.

10, 11. The first command was one which showed his great faith, and tested strongly the obedience of the people. The river Jordan lay between the camp and the land of their promised inheritance, and it must be passed over by them at the very outset of their march. But how could this be accomplished? Even if it were possible with difficulty and risk to transport over it a chosen handful of warriors, how could he possibly carry over the mixed multitude—the women and the children, and the flocks and the herds? Even over the fords of Jordan, under the most favorable circumstances of the river, this would have been almost impossible ; and at this season of the year, when from the melting of the snow upon the highlands Jordan was greatly flooded (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), it was more than ever impossible. Yet down to these threatening floods, on the hopeless errand of passing over them, all the people are ordered to march. Surely it must have been a sore strain upon the faith of the commander to issue such an order. But his faith was strong, and he commanded and was obeyed.
Wilberforce.

Within three days. They crossed on the tenth day of Nisan (ch. 4 : 19). Hence this

order is given on the seventh of the month. As the spies returned to the camp before the people crossed (ch. 2 : 23), and as these spies had been three days (*i e.*, parts of three days) in the mountain west of Jordan (ch. 2 : 22), they must have been sent out by Joshua on the sixth of the month, although the story of their expedition is not given until after this account of the command issued on the seventh. *Crosby.*

12-17. Joshua has a special word for the warriors of the two-and-a-half tribes already located in their national home on the east of Jordan. It was in the bond that their men of war, leaving their families in their eastern homes, should go over before their brethren, unincumbered, harnessed for battle. The record sets forth their prompt response to this call. *We are ready!* We wait for marching orders. "Only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses. Be strong and of a good courage." In these words we have the temper, the morale, of this army of conquest. The faith of God strong in their souls; their hearts on obedience to God; their eye on victory! *H. C.*

13. It is remarkable that Joshua does not plead the authority of the message which God had imparted to himself directly and personally, but bids them remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded them—thus acting as Moses' minister even after his death. *T. C.*

3 : 1. The morrow after the return of the spies, the camp at Shittim was broken up, and the host of Israel moved forward. It consisted of all those tribes who were to have their possessions west of the Jordan, along with forty thousand chosen warriors from Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. A reference to Nu. 26 : 7, 18, 34, shows that 70,580 of the men of war in the tribes Reuben and Gad and half Manasseh must have been left behind for the protection of the territory east of the Jordan. *A. E.*—**Came to Jordan and lodged there.** The first stage of Joshua's Conquest was the occupation of the vast trench, so to speak, which parted them from the mass of the Promised Land. Between it and them lay the deep valley of the Jordan with its mysterious river. "To pass over the Jordan and go in and possess the land," was a crisis in their fate, such as they had not experienced since the crossing of the Red Sea. *A. P. S.*

The enormous host, amounting to more than two millions—601,730 was the number of adult males returned at the census in the plains of Moab—descends from Shittim, the acacia groves which line the upper terraces of the valley on

either side of the river, to the bank of the surging stream. Arrived there, a delay of three days intervenes—an interval none too long for the completion of the necessary preparations, now that they were about to quit the comparative security of the wilderness, and enter on a hostile territory. *E. V.*—The people were already in point of numbers a great nation. The distinction into tribes already existed, and had been recognized even in Egypt. They had a standing army, consisting of all Israelites above twenty years of age; an army regularly organized; and an army which was inured to hardships and in some measure to war, as well as brought under discipline in the prolonged and trying march through the wilderness. The forms of worship and ceremonial observances had been already instituted. Their civil no less than their moral and ecclesiastical code was, as to all its leading provisions, already fixed. They had courts of justice and officers for the administration of the laws. In short, before they crossed the Jordan, they were already a nation, which only wanted a territory to take at once its place among the nations of the earth. *Lee.*

3. Go after it. Under the conduct of Moses, the ark was stationed in the centre while the host was encamped, and borne in the middle of the immense procession when it set forward. But they then had the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to precede them. Now the cloud is removed, and the ark is transferred to the vanguard of the army, to go before. *Bush.*—The ark of the covenant must be their guide. During the reign of Moses, the cloud was their guide, but now, in Joshua's reign, the ark; both were visible signs of God's presence and presidency; but divine grace under the Mosaic dispensation was wrapped up as in a cloud and covered with a veil, while by Christ, our Joshua, it is revealed in the ark of the covenant unveiled. *H.*

4. There shall be a space—about two thousand cubits. Two thousand cubits amounted to about one thousand yards, or three quarters of a mile, and this space was to intervene between them and the ark, in order that they might be impressed with a becoming awe and reverence of the symbol of the divine presence. *Bush.*—That ark which before was as the heart is now as the head; it was in the midst of Israel, while they encamped in the desert; now when the cloud is removed, it is in the front of the army; that as before they depended upon it for life, so now they should for direction. It must go before them on the

shoulders of the sons of Levi : they must follow it, but within sight, not within breathing. The Levites may not touch the ark, but only the bars : the Israelites may not approach nearer than a thousand paces to it. What awful respects doth God require to be given unto the testimonies of his presence ! *Bp. H.*

That ye may know the way ; for ye have not passed this way before.

In the untried and untravelled path, they are still to follow the leading of the same Jehovah. B.—“Ye have not passed this way heretofore.” The vista of the bygone years was never so long as it is to-day. Time never carried such a burden of events on his shoulders. Changes have taken place in society and in ourselves, and these changes are sure to go on. We should watch for occasions, that we may seize them ; for opportunities, that we may improve them ; for God in His manifold revealings and comings to us, that we may receive Him as our God. Courage will often be needed to do what the hand finds to do. The possession and cultivation of moral courage therefore is a very necessary preparation for this way that we have not passed heretofore. Gentleness is a good word to put under the shelter of courage, and a good thing to put among the preparations for the untried way. And filial confidence in God will easily, when occasion comes, pass into resignation. Finally, whatever comes, there will always be not only need and occasion but ground and reason for serene, invincible hopefulness. “Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” *Raleigh.*

5. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves. Rather, “had said,” for as he speaks of “to-morrow,” the charge was probably given on the day previous to the one now current, on which they were

passing over Jordan. The command now given was undoubtedly of the same import with that given by Moses, on the eve of the delivery of the law upon Mount Sinai (Ex. 19 : 10-14). *Bush.*—An order of deep significance was to be first obeyed : “Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” The entrance of God’s peculiar people into the Land of Promise must be prepared for by ceremonial purification. All outward pollution must be put away. How forcibly does this recall warnings relating to that “better country, even a heavenly one,” of which the earthly Canaan was but the type. How does the external purity enjoined by Joshua, before the children of Israel could be permitted to enter their earthly inheritance, remind us that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord ;” and that into the heavenly city “there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth.” E. V.

God’s purpose was ripe, and the hour of conquest was on the stroke ; all that remained for them to do was to prepare themselves for its fulfilment. “Sanctify yourselves.” The words set before us the condition and the cause of the Church’s success. The *condition* of success in the work of God to which the Church is called, is holiness, or personal consecration. The *cause* of the Church’s success is the Divine power. When God says “Sanctify yourselves,” it is the height of presumption and unbelief for us to sit down and say we cannot do it. Is it true that the light is waiting for the light-bearers ; that the power to be put forth is waiting for the condition on which it has pleased God to suspend it ? Yes, the power is there. We dare not doubt that the Lord is able and willing to put it forth. Therefore “Sanctify yourselves, and the Lord will do wonders among you.” *E. R. Conder.*

Section 205.

PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.

JOSHUA 3 : 6-17 ; 4 : 1-24.

3 6 AND Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.
7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel,
8 that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD
 10 your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that
 he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite,
 11 and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. Behold, the ark of
 12 the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore
 13 take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, for every tribe a man. And it shall come to
 pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the
 earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off, even the
 14 waters that come down from above ; and they shall stand in one heap. And it came to pass,
 when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of
 15 the covenant being before the people ; and when they that bare the ark were come unto Jor-
 dan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (for
 16 Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest), that the waters which came down
 from above stood, and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside
 Zarethan : and those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were
 17 wholly cut off : and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare
 the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all
 18 Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation were passed clean over Jordan. For
 the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished
 that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses com-
 12 manded Joshua : and the people hastened and passed over. And the children of Reuben, and
 the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of
 13 Israel, as Moses spake unto them : about forty thousand ready armed for war passed over be-
 fore the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

4 1 And it came to pass, when all the nation were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD
 2 spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,
 3 and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place
 where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them
 4 down in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve
 5 men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man : and Joshua
 said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and
 take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the
 6 tribes of the children of Israel : that this may be a sign among you, that when your children
 7 ask in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones ? then ye shall say unto them, Be-
 cause the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD ; when it
 passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off : and these stones shall be for a memorial
 8 unto the children of Israel for ever. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded,
 and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, accord-
 ing to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel ; and they carried them over with them
 9 unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve
 stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of
 the covenant stood : and they are there, unto this day.

15 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bare the ark of the
 16 testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. Joshua therefore commanded the priests, say-
 11 ing, Come ye up out of Jordan. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed
 over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.
 18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come
 up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry
 ground, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and went over all its banks, as
 19 aforetime. And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and
 20 encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took
 21 out of Jordan, did Joshua set up in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying,
 22 When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones ?
 23 then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For
 the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over,
 as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were
 24 passed over : that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is

14 mighty ; that they may fear the LORD your God forever. On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel ; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

Order of Events in Connection with the Passage of the Jordan: (1) At Joshua's bidding, the priests take up the Ark, and go before the people unto the brink of Jordan. (2) Jehovah assures Joshua that *He* will magnify him in the sight of all Israel. (3) Joshua announces the purpose of the coming miracle, and definitely states the exact form in which it will occur. (4) The event itself is narrated, as taking place in the form indicated by Joshua. (5) The priests bear the Ark and set it down in the midst of Jordan. (6) The entire host of Israel pass over the dried bed of the river. (7) Twelve previously designated men take twelve stones from the midst of Jordan, and lay them down at their lodging place on the farther side. (8) Twelve witnessing stones are also set up in the midst of Jordan, where the Ark rested. (9) Then, by special command of Jehovah, the priests bear the Ark to the farther shore. (10) Instantly, the waters of Jordan returned to their place. (11) The twelve stones are set up in Gilgal as a monumental witness of the miraculous passage of the river Jordan. (12) Joshua bids the people to instruct their children in the meaning and design of this monument. (A transposition of verses 10-14 of ch. 4 is made in the interest of orderly statement, and a more intelligent apprehension) B.

Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, a distance of 66 miles, the Jordan valley, or, as it is here called, the "Ghor," is from one to twelve miles wide ; the valley is in some places exceedingly fertile, in others perfectly barren ; it is bounded on the west by the mountain system of Palestine, and toward the sunrising by the edge of the great eastern plateau. The river descends with innumerable windings *through a lower valley of its own, from 40 to 100 feet below the level of the Ghor*, and along its margin there is a belt of tropical jungle, which is frequently alluded to in the Bible as the "excellency" or "pride" of Jordan. So tortuous is the course of the river, that though the two seas are only 66 miles apart, its actual length is about 200, and in this distance there is a fall of 666 feet. The Dead Sea, which receives the waters of the Jordan, is 1292 feet below the Mediterranean, and is about 46 miles long, its greatest width being ten and a half miles. On the east and west the lake is shut in by the barren hills which rise abruptly from its shores, but at its southern end there is a level plain—and then the

ground rises to the ridge 787 feet above the sea—which separates the waters of the Dead Sea from those of the Red Sea. (See N. T., Vol. I., p. 656.) **3 : 15.** We are told that Jordan "overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest," April and May ; and in 1 Chron. 12 : 15, that Jordan had "overflowed all his banks" in the first month—that is, in the month Nisan, which commenced with the new moon of March or April. The water in the Jordan is at its highest level in March, April, and May, after the cessation of the rainy season, but the physical features of the country are such that no sudden rise of the river would be likely to cause a large inundation, the Sea of Galilee acting as a regulator to the flow of water, and the terraced banks of Jordan preventing the spread of its waters over any large portion of the valley. A more correct rendering of the original would be that Jordan "is full up to all his banks" or runs with full banks, and this is true at the present day, the river rising to the level of its banks after the rains, and only overflowing them to a short distance in exceptional places. The great depressed valley of the Jordan formed a natural division of the country, dividing it sharply into two regions, and this separation was the more strongly marked by the difficulty of crossing the river at certain seasons of the year, and also of obtaining access to it, the only roads to the valley being rough paths down a few steep water-courses. *Wilson.*

Back of the proper channel of the river is a first terrace, two hundred yards, or in places much more, in width. This is liable to be overflowed, and is enriched by the deposit of the river. Back of this is a second shelf of land, from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet above the first. This is covered with a gray, salty soil, much cut up by the rain-flow, and is studded with clumps of bushy shrubbery. Back of this plain the land rises to a third terrace stretching to the foot of the mountains, which here are seven miles away on the west. On the east side of the river a similar plain stretches to the foot of the Moab hills. This plain is "The Plain of Jericho" or "The Plain of Jordan." It is fourteen miles east and west by eight miles north and south. The Ghor is narrower farther to the north, in some places forming a plain not more than three miles in width. Though now for the most part a wilderness, irrigation would restore to it its ancient productiveness. Tho

waters of the upper Jordan, now flowing into the Dead Sea, could be made to convert the Ghor into a garden. *Dulles.*

The river overflows during harvest. On the 1st of April, I found barley harvest about Jericho already ended, the river full to the brim; and saw evidence in abundance that it had overflowed its banks very recently. Harvest in the vale of the Lower Jordan comes on about the middle of March. This seems early, but the reason is obvious. The valley at Jericho is thirteen hundred feet below the level of the ocean, is sheltered from cold winds on all sides by mountains of great height, and is open to the warm southern breezes from the deeper basin of the Dead Sea. It has therefore the climate of the tropics, though in the latitude of Jerusalem. *W. M. Thompson.*

3 : 10. From what God was now about to do for them, he infers an assurance of what he would yet further do. This he mentions first, so much was his heart upon it, and so great a satisfaction did it give him. "*Hereby ye shall know that the living God (the true God and God of power) is among you in this great undertaking; and therefore you shall, nay, he himself will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites.*" So that the dividing of Jordan was intended to be to them a sure token of God's presence with them, and a sure pledge of the conquest of Canaan. *H.*

12. This command of Joshua to the tribes was given in anticipation of the Divine direction (4 : 2), concerning the monumental stones to be taken from the midst of the river and set up on the farther side. It was a simple order to choose and appoint the representative men, that they might be in place and readiness for the work assigned. *B.*

16, 17. "Then the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up upon an heap very far and wide, near the town of Adama that is beside Zaretan: but those that came down toward the sea into the plain failed and were cut off. So the people crossed over, and the priests stood in the middle in the open place appointed them by God, upon dry ground (until all the people, passing them, had gone through Jordan)." The time chosen by God for the miracle was most suitable on account of the harvest; for the place where they were now to encamp gave them an early foretaste of the fruitfulness of the land. Broad fields, interspersed toward Jericho with groves of palm-trees, characterized the country. The Israelites had not seen such a fruitful land since they left Egypt. And thus at their very

arrival crops stood ready for them on their stems. *C. G. B.*

The same power that divided the Red Sea before Moses, divides Jordan before Joshua; that they might see the hand of God as present with Joshua to bring them into Canaan, as it was with Moses to bring them out of Egypt. *Bp. H.*—As at the Red Sea, so at the river, the simple duty of Israel was to "go forward;" and the Lord, who had taken their fathers through the sea, took the children through the stream of Jordan. Wonders were now done by the sacred ark; and, as the feet of the priests, bearing that symbol of God's throne, touched the river at its brink, the waters of Jordan were held back on the upper side, and those below running down to the Dead Sea, a broad passage was opened to the mighty host. All passed over dry-shod, while the priests, with the ark, stood still to the last moment in the bed of the river. *D. F.*

4 : 10. And the people hasted and passed over. They made the best use of the opportunity afforded them, and hastened across the river while thus laid bare for them. But there was no time for presumptuous delays. *W. H. G.*—They were indeed "Hebrews"—men from the other side—now, and would set themselves to the dangerous task before them with courage. Well begun is half done; and God would not divide the river for them to thrust them into a tiger's den, where they would be torn to pieces. Retreat was impossible now. A new page in their history was turned. The desert was as unreachable as Egypt. The passage of the Jordan rounded off the epoch which the passage of the Red Sea introduced, and began a new era. *A. M.*

4 : 8. Took twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan. It appears that the Jordan continued perfectly dry for some time after the Israelites had passed over; that is, till the priests removed from the place where they stood. They took twelve stones—great stones, as the Hebrew word imports, and carried them to their lodging-place, to Gilgal where they lodged that night. *Bp. Patrick.*

11. Through all the stir the ark was still. Over all the march it watched. So long as one Israelite was in the channel it remained, a silent presence, to ensure his safety. It let their rate of speed determine the length of its standing there. It waited for the slowest foot and the weariest laggard. God makes his very present help of the same length as our necessities, and lets us beat the time to which he conforms. Not till the last loiterer has struggled to the farther shore does he cease by his presence to keep us

safe on the strange road which by his presence he has opened for us. A. M.

18. Then, when the whole multitude had passed over, the ark, which had hitherto stood motionless on the eastern bank, on the Levites' shoulders, descends into the bed and mounts the other side of the ravine. As soon as it has reached a place of perfect security, and "the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land"—the miracle ceasing the instant the necessity for it ceased—the imprisoned waters set free from the restraining Hand, "returned unto their place." E. V.

The waters of the river flowed down according to their usual course, and soon filled the channel again. This makes it yet more evident that the stop which had now been given to the river was not from any secret natural cause, but purely from the power of God's presence and for the sake of his Israel; for when Israel's turn was served and the token of his presence was removed, immediately the water went forward again. So that if it be asked, *What ailed thee, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back?* it must be answered, It was purely in obedience to the God of Israel and in kindness to the Israel of God: there is therefore none like unto the God of Jeshurun; happy also art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people? H.—The intervention of Omnipotence lasted until its purpose was completely accomplished. No tribe, no individual, was left behind. The waters were not released one moment too soon. And God's providential care is equally minute and thoughtful, and so is the bestowment of his grace. W. H. G.

20. At the passage of the Jordan, one group of twelve stones was formed in the bed of the river (4 : 9), to serve as a landmark of the station of the priests who bore the ark while the members of all the tribes crossed over, and as an affidavit of the miraculous suspension of the river; while another group of twelve stones was formed on the Jordan plain, to serve as an everlasting remembrancer of the river-transit at flood-time by divine aid. Paine.—These stones were planted on the upper terrace of the plain of the Jordan, and became the centre of the first sanctuary of the Holy Land,—the first place pronounced "holy," the "sacred place" of the Jordan valley, where the tabernacle remained till it was fixed at Shiloh. Gilgal long retained reminiscences of its ancient sanctity. Stanley.

Gilgal stood "in the east border of Jericho." Its position can be laid down accurately, though but faint ruins mark its site. Its interest centres in its having been the first camping-ground

of the hosts of Israel after crossing the Jordan. Here were set up the twelve stones taken from the bed of the river as a witness. Here the younger Israelites were circumcised, and here the first Passover was kept in the land. The site, a mile and a half from Er Riha, the modern Jericho, is marked by a number of artificial mounds called Tellayla't Jiljulieh. Tristram.

—There was another Gilgal six miles north of Bethel, connected with the lives of Elijah and Elisha (2 K. 2 : 2). There were several other towns of the name of Gilgal, some of which are mentioned in De. 11 : 30, and in Josh. 12 : 23 ; 15 : 7. Crosby.

21. This memorial pile stood for ages to suggest to the youth of Canaan the inquiry, What mean these stones? and to afford to Hebrew fathers the opportunity of repeating and so perpetuating the ancient story. So let all the great works of God be held forever in the hearts of his people. It is wholesome to fathers to repeat the story, wholesome to children to hear it and place it deep in their memories, till they in their turn become fathers and tell it to their children. H. C.—**24.** The twofold lesson of this memorial was, "that all nations of the earth might know the hand of Jehovah that it is strong," and "that they [Israel] might fear Jehovah your God always." In regard to the first of these lessons, we mark the larger missionary hope set before Israel. The heathen nations were to learn the knowledge of Jehovah's hand. This carries us far beyond the statement that the terror of Israel should fall upon them (Josh. 2 : 9). Thus at the very entrance of Israel into Canaan, and by that divine interposition which made it possible, was the future universal kingdom to be advanced, the foundation of which lies in the fact that Jehovah is "Lord of all the earth." A. E.—The stones at Gilgal, though long ago scattered, emphasize, through the record of them, that initial truth which God would ever have us make the great foundation of religion; a truth which lights up a train of inquiry and revelation that shines more and more unto the perfect day of Christ,—that, however invisible God's hand may commonly be, it is ever present, operating for the protection and reward of them that covenant to keep his law. Cable.

These gray stones preached at once the duty of remembering and the danger of forgetting the past mercies of God. The stones were set up because Israel remembered, but also lest Israel should forget. We often think of the Jews as monsters of ingratitude; but we should more truly learn the lesson of their history, if we re-

garded them as fair, average men, and asked ourselves whether our recollection of God's goodness to us is much more vivid than theirs. Unless we make distinct and frequent efforts to recall, we shall certainly forget God's goodness. The cultivation of thankful remembrance is a very large part of practical religion ; and it is not by accident that the Psalmist puts it in the middle, between hope and obedience, when he says " that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps. 78 : 7). The memorial stones further proclaimed the duty of parental instruction in God's mercies. Notwithstanding all differences in means of obtaining knowledge, the old law remains in full force, that the parent is the natural and most powerful instructor in the ways of God. The Jewish father was not to send his child to some Levite or other to get his question answered, but was to answer it himself. The same principle which led to the erection of this simple monument reaches its highest and sacredest instance in the institution of the Lord's Supper, in which Jesus condescends to avail himself of material symbols in order to secure a firmer place in treacherous memories. He might well have expected that such stupendous love could never be forgotten ; but he knoweth our frame, and trusts some share in keeping his death vividly in the hearts of his people to the humble ministry of bread and wine. Strange that we should need to be reminded of the death which it is life to remember ! Blessed that, needing it, we have the need so tenderly met, and that he does not disdain to accept loving memories which slumber till stirred by such poor reminders of his unspeakable love. A. M.

14. On that day Jehovah magnified Joshua. As he had declared (Josh. 3 : 7) that he would do. The greatness resulting to Joshua from the event of that day was due to the evidence afforded that God was present with him in a conspicuous manner, and that he made him an instrument through whom to exert and to display his power. No higher honor can be put upon any man than to have it appear that God is with him and works through him and for him. W. H. G.—The miraculous passage of the Red Sea was God's autographic signature to the commission of Moses. In the same way the miraculous passage of the Jordan was God's autographic signature to the commission of Joshua. C. H. P.

The tenth day of the first month was the eventful one—four days before their feast of the Passover, and among the first days of the barley

harvest. When nightfall came over Israel they were in the long-promised land. They had crossed the Jordan. They were not only in Canaan, but were there with one more fresh testimony that their God was with them. Eventful days were before them ; scenes of war and blood were in prospect ; but the men of faith throughout all the camp of Israel sang their evening song with glad heart and rested on their arms feeling that it was enough for them that their God was there ; had brought them into his own land of promise, and would carry the work of its conquest through in his own time and way. H. C.—The importance of this miracle can hardly be overestimated. The people were now about to enter on a fresh stage of their national existence, and that under a new leader. The assurance of the continued presence and protection of Jehovah, afforded by the drying up of Jordan, was exactly what was needed to encourage their fainting hearts, and secure for Joshua, accredited by so mighty a sign, the loyal allegiance of the people. This is the light in which this miracle is set before us in the words of God to Joshua. Another purpose to be answered by this exercise of the Divine power in behalf of Israel, was to deepen the feeling of discouragement already, as we have seen, existing in the minds of the Canaanites, and thus prepare for their easier and complete overthrow. That this was the effect of this miracle is next plainly stated by the sacred historian. E. V.

The Miraculous Character of the Crossing.

The passage of this rapid, though not wide, river at the most unfavorable season, was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the " Red Sea." It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed to silence cavils respecting the former ; and it was done in the noonday, in the face of the sun, and in the presence of the neighboring inhabitants ; and struck terror into the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites, westward of the river, whose " heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." *Hales.*—It requires no argument to prove that this fact was miraculous : it was not accidental or it could not have been foreseen (verses 5, 10, 13) ; it was not natural, for the river was at its height (verse 15), and the waters that had been descending stood on an heap (verse 16) ; it was not the effect of art, for any artificial alteration of the channel the people must have known ; and besides, the effect could not have been instantaneous. *Graves.*

This seems to us even a more signal miracle than the passage of the Red Sea ; and it appears as if expressly framed not only to effect its own objects but to relieve the other from all naturalistic interpretations. In the course of the Red Sea passage we hear travellers and scholars talk learnedly about east winds and tides and shallows, so that the fact, as a demonstration of Divine power, is explained away or attenuated. But nothing of this is possible in the case of the passage of the Jordan. It was a miracle or it was nothing. There has not been and there cannot be any explanation of it on natural grounds. And if men are obliged to admit this—unless they would deny the authority of the narrative altogether—it becomes scarcely worth their while to tamper with the Red Sea miracle. *Kit.*—Given the importance of Israel as the depositaries of revelation, there is nothing unreasonable in a miracle which so powerfully contributed to their conquest of Canaan, and we have yet to learn that there is anything unreasonable in the belief that they *were* the depositaries of revelation. The fundamental postulate of the Old Testament is a supernatural revelation, and that opens the door for any miracle needful for its accomplishment. We should be very slow to pronounce on what is worthy of God ; but any man who believes in a divine revelation given to the world through Israel,

may well believe in such a miracle as this at such a moment of their history. A. M.

The Egypt-history, the wilderness-history, the Jordan-history, never become obsolete. The Books of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, are almost as valid histories of our individual lives as of the life of the Hebrews at large. These chapters, and this third of Joshua, are like some of the Psalms of David in this respect, that though so old they still carry with easy grace the sentiments and experience of to-day with which the men of to-day laud them. It is one of the marvellous characteristics of these old Bible narratives that they still furnish us better figures and phrases than any new ones we can invent for describing events and *transitions* in our own experience. C. H. P.

What will it avail us to have passed a wilderness, if the waves of Jordan should swallow us up? But the same hand that hath made the way hard hath made it sure : he that made the wilderness comfortable will make Jordan dry ; he will master all difficulties for us ; and those things which we most feared, will he make most sovereign and beneficial to us. O God, as we have trusted thee with the beginning, so will we with the finishing of our glory. Faithful art thou that hast promised, which wilt also do it. *Bp. H.*

Section 206.

THE COVENANT RENEWED, WITH CIRCUMCISION AND THE PASSOVER. THE ANGEL-JEHOVAH APPEARS TO JOSHUA.

JOSHUA 5 : 1-15.

5 1 AND it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were beyond Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard how that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee knives of flint, and circumcise again the
3 children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him knives of flint, and circumcised the
4 children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circum-
cise : all the people that came forth out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war,
5 died in the wilderness by the way, after they came forth out of Egypt. For all the people
that came out were circumcised : but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the
6 way as they came forth out of Egypt, they had not circumcised. For the children of Israel
walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the nation, even the men of war which came forth
out of Egypt, were consumed, because they hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD : unto

whom the LORD swore that he would not let them see the land which the LORD swore unto
 7 their fathers that he would give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. And their children,
 whom he raised up in their stead, them did Joshua circumcise : for they were uncircumcised,
 8 because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done
 circumcising all the nation, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.
 9 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off
 you. Wherefore the name of that place was called Gilgal, unto this day.
 10 And the children-of Israel encamped in Gilgal ; and they kept the passover on the four-
 11 teenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn
 [produce] of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn,
 12 in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old
 corn of the land ; neither had the children of Israel manna any more ; but they did eat of the
 fruit of the land of Canaan that year.
 13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked,
 and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand : and
 14 Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ? And he
 said, Nay ; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his
 face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant ?
 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot ; for
 the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

5 : 1. *Amorites, Canaanites.* Under the Amorites and Canaanites are here included the several other nations of Canaan, as the Hittites, Hivites, etc., these two being the most powerful nations. The Amorites, on the side of Jordan "westward," are distinguished from the Amorites eastward of Jordan, whom the Israelites had subdued already. The Canaanites "by the sea," that is, by the Mediterranean Sea, are the nation more properly called by this name, of which, however, there were colonies in other parts. *Patrick.*—Seven nations were dwelling in Canaan when the Israelites approached it. These had their fortified towns, their mountain-fastnesses, and in the plains, their horses and their chariots of iron. The invading Israelites possessed small experience of war, and were utterly destitute of war horses and chariots, and of engines needed for the reduction of walled cities and fortresses. N. C. B.

1-10. The historian records two facts. First, that the tidings of this wonderful passage over the dry bed of the Jordan flashed over the hills and valleys of Canaan, bearing terror and dismay to all hearts. Alas, said they, who can stand before this mighty God of Israel ! "Their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." The second fact is that Joshua proceeded to the most unmilitary *act of circumcising* all his men of war—indeed all the children of Israel. With apparently not the least fear lest the Canaanites should muster their forces and fall suddenly upon them—with a deep feeling obviously that his first concern was to be right before God, and to have all his soldiers and people right in heart

and true to every precept of their God, he suspended all military movements ; gave his enemies time to recover from their panic ; halted his army not only for some days of circumcision but for the *feast of the Passover* seven days—all as if religion was indefinitely more than military strategy—as it truly was ! H. C.—That was no idle or gratuitous display of power, which afforded to the Canaanites, to Israel, and to Joshua himself, such unmistakable evidence that "the living God, the Lord of all the earth,"—no dead idol, or mere local deity—was among them, "and that he would not fail nor forsake them." E. V.

2-12. The passage of the Jordan was completed on the tenth day of the first month (Nisan = April). This was the day appointed for the selection of the Paschal Lamb, and on the evening of the fourteenth the people kept the Passover for the first time on the sacred soil of their inheritance, exactly forty years after their fathers had first kept it before leaving Egypt. But first, God commanded Joshua to circumcise the people ; for the circumcised generation, who had left Egypt, had died in the wilderness, and none of the present generation had been circumcised. This may be regarded as a renewal of the covenant with Abraham in the very land the promise of which had been sealed with the same sign. P. S.—**3.** There is a general circumcision now of the people, as there had been at their coming out of Egypt ; and as God then closed the Egyptians in three days' darkness that they could not stir, so now he striketh the Canaanites with terror that they dare not stir to hurt the people while they were

sore. Circumcision sealed the lease of the land of Canaan; and therefore as soon as they set foot on it they must be circumcised. *Lightfoot.*

9. Entered on the Land of Promise, God once more regarded them as his own covenant people, and therefore the sign of the covenant was renewed. At the frontier fortress of Gilgal, entrenched by Joshua on the rising ground overlooking Jericho, Israel "cast off the slough of their wandering life," and "rolled away the reproach of Egypt," by submitting once more, at the Divine command, to the distinguishing ordinance of circumcision. Knives of flint, reserved in other countries for this and other religious rites, were used for the ceremony by which Joshua, "the type of Him who alone gives the new circumcision"—the circumcision of the heart "made without hands" (Col. 2 : 11), readmitted Abraham's descendants to the covenant made with their great ancestor. E. V.—The best view assumes that Egypt had reproached Israel with their failure to reach Canaan during the long wanderings of forty years in the wilderness, and that God was then to roll off this reproach by visibly taking the people again into covenant relation with himself, indicated by this circumcision, and so would give them Canaan. That circumcision had been omitted in the wilderness, especially after the unbelief in the matter of the spies, implied that God's covenant with his people was temporarily inoperative because of that unbelief. At Gilgal the Lord was returning to them in his great mercy. H. C.—The reviving of circumcision was designed to revive the observation of other institutions, the omission of which had been connived at in the wilderness. This command to circumcise them was to remind them of that which Moses had told them (De. 12 : 8), that when they were *come over Jordan* they must not do as they had done *in the wilderness*, but must come under a stricter discipline. It was said concerning many of the laws God had given them, that they must observe them *in the land* to which they were going. H.

10. And kept the Passover. The third from its institution. The first was observed in Egypt on the eve of their departure, the second at Sinai on the following year (Nu. 9 : 1, 2), while during the long interval down to the present time it had been wholly suspended. *Bush.*—Three days after this national reconciliation of Israel, on the 14th of Nisan, the passover was celebrated. Never since its first institution had its import been more powerfully shown. They were delivered from Egypt in order that they might hold possession of Ca-

naan; and now at last Canaan was reached. The memorial of what Jehovah had done for their fathers would quicken their faith, and fill them with confidence as to the issue of the conflict that lay before them. For though reached, Canaan was not conquered; from the lodging-place at Gilgal, the walls and towers of Jericho, "great and fenced up to heaven," would be a stern but salutary reminder of the nature of the struggle on which they were about to enter, and of the need of a strength not their own to secure a successful issue. E. V.

This Passover, far beyond any other yet, was suggestive of the scenes of the original institution of it forty years before—on that most eventful night of doom to Egypt, but of joyful redemption to Israel. The redemption begun there in Egypt was consummated, in a measure, here in Canaan. This crossing of the Jordan must have suggested the crossing of the Red Sea by their fathers, three days after the first Passover night. That earlier crossing put the Red Sea between them and Egyptian bondage: this latter crossing put the Jordan between them and their wilderness life. The most precious thought of all would be that God was equally in both—his uplifted right arm was made glorious for their redemption, both there and here. It must have been inspiring to all devout souls to celebrate the majesty and loving-kindness of their fathers' God.

11, 12. Among the new experiences of their Canaan life was a supply of bread from the corn (not as in our English "the *old* corn," but the corn) of the land. The manna ceased as suddenly as it began. Forty years (less one and a half months) it had been the nation's bread, fresh each morning (save the Sabbath) from God's lower heavens. The period of its fall measured their wilderness life. This being past the manna ceased. H. C.

11. And they did eat of the old corn of the land. Of the old *grain* of whatever kind it were. The original phrase, however, may be rendered simply, "They did eat of the *product* or *yielding* of the earth," in contradistinction from the manna which came from heaven. **And parched corn.** That is, the new corn of the present year, which they found standing in the fields. The new or green corn was parched to enable them more easily to grind it for food. This would not be necessary in respect to old corn. *Bush.*

12. The manna ceased. Now that Israel is brought to the brim of Canaan, the cloud is vanished which led them all the way; and as soon as they have crossed Jordan, the

manna ceaseth which nourished them all the way. The cloud and manna were for their passage, not for their rest ; for the wilderness, not for Canaan. *Bp. H.*—The manna which had been given to them (Ex. 16) now ceased, since they no longer required any miraculous means of subsistence. By its thus ceasing, it was more distinctly marked as a precious miraculous boon. C. G. B.

The manna ceasing when the Israelites ate of the corn of Canaan teaches us the lesson that God's help is given, not to supersede our self-help, but to enable us to help ourselves. He gave manna where the Israelites could not provide their own food, and continued it only till they were able to supply themselves. The difference between manna and corn is most suggestive. Manna was a supernatural product provided directly by Divine power. It came to the Israelites in the wilderness without any toil or trouble of their own, and therefore it was but little esteemed by them. But corn implies and involves great and continuous labor. At every step and stage of its growth and preparation for food it demands the sweat of the face and requires that man should be a fellow-worker with God. And is there not the same wide difference in spiritual things between manna and corn, between what is given to us without any toil or trouble of our own, and what is wrought out for us and in us, as the result of our own toil, and, it may be, our own sad experience? No doubt we should prefer manna to corn ; we should like to get heavenly blessings straight out of God's hands. But the rule of the Divine kingdom is, "No cross, no crown." *H. Macmillan.*

This discontinuance of the supply by which the people had been so long sustained, no less marks the signal providence of God, than the original grant of it, and its long continuance. It came not one day before it was needed ; and it was continued not one day longer than was really required by the wants of the people. This strikingly showed the Lord's care, and evinced the miraculous nature of the supply. Such indications as this of the Lord's presence and power, were little less than visible manifestations of Deity. The life of the Christian believer does not lack similar experiences. In tracing his life back through its varied scenes, how plainly can he see that—however his heart may at times have failed him—his Lord has under all circumstances cared for him, even in the matters which belong to his daily bread. What tranquillity of mind, what blessedness of rest, may be realized, what harassing anxieties avoided, if we will only let such experience have

its perfect work, by inducing us to cast all our care upon Him who careth for us, leaving him to determine what we shall lose or what retain, in the firm conviction that he will decide better for us than we, who can never determine with certainty what may be eventually good for us, could decide for ourselves. *Kit.*

13-15. The Prince of the army of Jehovah appears to Joshua. This is told as if he were different from Jehovah. But in verse 15 he identifies Himself manifestly with the Malakh that appeared to Moses, and in 6 : 2 he again appears as Jehovah himself, who gives Jericho into Joshua's hands. *O.*—The real import of this passage has been obscured by the unfortunate division of chs. 5, 6. These chapters should have been run on without a break, the first verse of ch. 6 being merely parenthetical, and the words, "And the Lord said unto Joshua," etc. (6 : 2), following in sense "and Joshua did so," at the end of ch. 6. *E. V.*—Besides his assuming the title of the "captain of the host of the Lord," he is called directly Jehovah at verse 2 of the next chapter ; and Joshua's falling down and worshipping him, not only without being reproved for doing him too much honor but, on the contrary, with a command to do him more by loosing his shoe from his foot (which was the highest acknowledgment of a divine presence customary among Eastern nations), is a circumstance which affords the surest evidence of the divinity of his person. *Stackhouse.*—That he who thus appeared as a warrior, and called himself captain of the Lord's host, was no other than "the Word," was plainly the sense of the ancient Jewish church. *Allix.*—It is the established opinion of both ancient and modern expositors that this was no other than the Son of God, the Eternal Word, appearing in that form which he was afterward to assume for the redemption of men. *Bush.*

From many passages in the Old and New Testaments (notably Is. 68 : 8, 9 ; John 8 : 56) we are led to believe : that Christ exercised great concern in the affairs of the Old Testament Church ; that He did at certain periods discover Himself in the garb which He was afterward to assume, and which when assumed He went on to wear forever ; that He was the superior angel whom we find speaking under that manifestation, and to whom, always, Divine honors were paid. *Vaughan.* (See O. T., Vol. 1, p. 337.)

The person who appeared called himself Captain or Prince of the Lord's host, and commanded Joshua to take off his shoes, as happened at Ex. 3 : 5. In that passage he is called the Angel

of the Lord, and this person calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In both places, then, it is the same being—He who, as the Angel of the Covenant, went before the people in the pillar of cloud and fire, and who now reveals himself, for the encouragement of Joshua and the people, as the unseen Leader, with the sword which nothing could withstand. C. G. B.—So then the mission of Joshua was substantially the continuation and completion of that of Moses. As at the commencement of the latter, the Angel of the Covenant had appeared and spoken out of the burning bush, so He now also appeared to Joshua, while the symbolical act of “loosing the shoe off his foot,” in reverent acknowledgment of the Holy One of Israel, recalled the vision of Moses, and at the same time connected it with that of his successor. A. E.

13. He here appeared as a soldier, with *his sword drawn in his hand*. To Abraham in his tent he appeared as a traveller; to Joshua in the field as a man of war: Christ will be to his people what their faith expects and desires. Christ had his sword drawn, which served to justify the war Joshua was engaging in, and to show him that it was of God, who gave him commission to kill and slay. H.—It was a much-needed assurance, vouchsafed in such visible form as should make it decisive and effectual, that the same invisible Divine Leader who had brought their fathers safely through the wilderness would be also with this generation in their task of reducing the war-like races of Canaan and their strongly-fenced cities. It was, further, a most expressive token that the fearful work of extermination before the Israelites was indeed a divine judicial visitation on the Seven Nations, whose iniquity was now full; and that their execution of it was a duty warranted, as it could alone be warranted, by a most undoubted special divine command. The drawn sword in the hand of the Son of God we can now clearly perceive to indicate who was the real, though invisible, Agent in that act of doom. Medd.

What the sight of the Burning Bush had been to Moses at Horeb, that the vision of the Captain of the hosts of the Lord was to Joshua at Gilgal. In each case the specific character of the vision was in sympathy with the circumstances of the time. The furnace of the Egyptian bondage and the war-like preparations for the approaching campaign are reflected in the forms of the respective apparitions. This is to be explained by the consideration that God speaks to His creatures in all ages, through sights

and sympathies which they most readily understand. H. P. L.

God appears in the form best suited to His servant's need. He contended as an athlete with Jacob that by wrestling the patriarch's faith and knowledge might be increased. To Moses, needing to be reminded of the indestructibility of the Church of God, there was shown a burning bush unconsumed. And now, to inspire Joshua for the campaign, God reveals Himself as a warrior armed and as the “Prince of the Lord's host,” Captain of the visible and invisible armies, the Israelites and the angels. Analogous to these varied appearances are the titles of God, framed to assure His people that He can “supply all their need.” W. F. A.—God gave these miraculous manifestations to the leading men of those times, that *we* might know Him to be always near in the fulness of his love and power. In the heightened spirituality and richer grace of our Christian times we have the substance which those mystic visions did but shadow forth. In place of startling signs and symbols we have *Divine words of promise*, appeals to faith, awakening the intelligence and kindling the heart; words of assurance to every believer. Wai'e.

And Joshua went unto him. Displaying herein a remarkable courage and intrepidity. Instead of turning away from the formidable personage before him, and seeking hastily to regain the camp, he walks boldly up, and demands of him whether he be a friend or a foe. This undaunted bearing was the fruit of his strong confidence in God. No face of clay will intimidate him who looks upon God as his friend and protector, and who is found in the way of duty. The good man is ever the true hero. Bush.

14. Here were now, as of old (Gen. 32 : 2), *Mahanaim, two hosts*, a host of Israelites ready to engage the Canaanites, and a host of angels to protect them therein, and he, as Captain of both, conducts the host of Israel, and commands the host of angels to their assistance. Perhaps, in allusion to this, Christ is called the *Captain of our salvation* (Heb. 2 : 10), and a *Leader and Commander to the people* (Is. 55 : 4). He now came as Captain to give the necessary orders for the besieging of Jericho. H.

15. Soldier-like, the captain-general had demanded of him, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” The challenge woke at once the voice of Majesty. “Nay, not as thou deemest am I: prepare thy soul for God's unlooked-for visitation: as Captain of the Host of the Lord am I come. Not as mingling with these

earthly hosts, but as thy fellow in a higher order ; as the Mighty One in heavenly places of whom thou art here, and now on earth the type and shadow : as Him whom all angels worship, as the uncreated Angel of the Covenant, as the Captain of the heavenly host of God have I come to thee." The soul of Joshua owned at once the presence of his God ; "he fell on his face to the earth and did worship," and cried, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" And then came the answer which the Minister of Moses would read so readily in all the wide extent of its mysterious significance, the "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy." That burning bush of which his great master had so often told him in their solemn communings, must have risen before his eyes ; and there was renewed unto him, with all the added awe of such a personal appearance, the earlier promise, "As I was with Moses so also I will be with Thee." *Wilberforce.*

And most signally did he fight for Israel: in the miraculous downfall of the walls of Jericho (6 : 20) ; in destroying the confederated southern nations with hailstones in their flight (18 : 11) ; in prolonging the day of battle to an unusual length, at Joshua's petition, by making the sun and moon stand still about a whole day (10 : 12-27) ; by driving out some of the northern nations by the *hornet* or *gad-fly*. (24 : 12), as foretold by Moses (Ex. 23 : 28 ; De. 7 : 20). *Hales.*

Between Moses and Joshua the difference was marked as strongly as possible. Joshua was the soldier,—the first soldier, consecrated by the Sacred history. He was not a teacher, not a Prophet. He was a simple, straightforward, undaunted soldier. What is required of him, and described in him, is that he was "very courage-

ous." "He was strong and of a good courage." "He was not afraid nor dismayed." He turned neither to the right hand nor to the left ; but at the head of the hosts of Israel he went right forward from Jordan to Jericho, from Jericho to Ai, from Ai to Gibeon, to Beth-horon, to Merom. He wavered not for a moment ; he was here, he was there, he was everywhere, as the emergency called for him. He had no words of wisdom, except those which shrewd common sense and public spirit dictated. To him the Divine Revelation was made not in the burning bush nor in the still small voice, but as "the Captain of the Lord's host, with a drawn sword in his hand ;" and that drawn and glittering sword was the vision which went before him through the land, till all the kings of Canaan were subdued beneath his feet. Slight as may be the connection between the first and last to whom this name of Joshua or Jesus was given with any religious significance, it demands our consideration for the sake of two points which are often overlooked, and which may in this relation catch the attention of those who might else overlook them altogether. One is the prominence into which it brings the true meaning of the sacred Name, as a deliverance from enemies as real as the Canaanitish host. The first Joshua was to save his people from their actual foes. The Second was to "save his people from *their* sins." Again, the career of Joshua gives a note of preparation for the singularly martial, soldier-like aspect—also often forgotten—under which his Namesake is at times set forth. The courage, the cheerfulness, the sense of victory and success, which runs both through the actual history of the Gospels, and through the idealization of it in "the Conqueror" of the writings of John, finds its best illustration from the older church in the character and career of Joshua. *Stanley.*

Section 207.

FALL AND DESTRUCTION OF JERICH0. SPARING OF RAHAB AND HER KINDRED.

JOSHUA 6 : 1-27.

1 (Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel : none went out, and none
2 came in.) And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the
3 king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all the men of
4 war, going about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear
seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark : and the seventh day ye shall compass the city

5 seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall be, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the
6 people shall go up every man straight before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven
7 trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. And they said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD. And it was
8 so, that when Joshua had spoken unto the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD passed on, and blew with the trumpets : and the ark of the
9 covenant of the LORD followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and the rearward went after the ark, *the priests* blowing with the trumpets as
10 they went. And Joshua commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you
11 shout ; then shall ye shout. So he caused the ark of the LORD to compass the city, going about it once : and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.
13 And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets : and the armed men went before them ; and the rearward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* blowing with the trumpets as they went.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp : so they did
15 six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times : only on that day they com-
16 passed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout ; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to the LORD : only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers
18 that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing ; so should ye make the camp of Israel accursed, and
19 trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto the
20 LORD : they shall come into the treasury of the LORD. So the people shouted, and *the priests* blew with the trumpets : and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went
21 up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, and sheep,
22 and ass, with the edge of the sword. And Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out the land, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath,
23 as ye swear unto her. And the young men the spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had, all her kindred also they
24 brought out ; and they set them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein : only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of
25 iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. But Rahab the harlot, and her father's household, and all that she had, did Joshua save alive ; and she dwelt in the midst of Israel, unto this day ; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua charged them with an oath at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho : with the loss of his firstborn shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

27 So the LORD was with Joshua ; and his fame was in all the land.

1. This verse, as noted by E. V. in previous section, is a parenthesis. And the second verse has a close connection with the last verse of the preceding chapter. It simply *continues the colloquy* between the Angel Jehovah and Joshua. The interview closes with the instructions of Jehovah to his servant, extending through the fifth verse. B.

Jericho was situated in the deep depression

of the Jordan Valley, six miles north of the Dead Sea, and about eight miles west of the river Jordan. It lay upon the western limit of the Valley, which is here bordered by a steep and lofty range of mountains, presenting a barrier to the interior country seemingly impenetrable. The plain of Jericho is well watered from copious springs which burst from the mountains' base ; and the region of the old city,

even at the present time, shows a luxuriance of vegetable growths. N. C. B.

Jericho, "the city of palm-trees," was beautifully situated at the foot of a lofty limestone range, close by a number of prolific fountains, that still spread beauty and fertility as far as the eye can reach. In the days of Joshua, a glorious palm forest—now, like the balsam-trees, utterly gone—stretched along the vale about eight miles in length and three in breadth, Jericho being situated on the west side and Gilgal (it is believed) on the east of this forest. As the Israelites came up toward Gilgal, emerging from the forest of palms, they would see the lofty battlements of Jericho rising proudly to heaven; and behind, the steep mountain cliffs where the two men who were sent to spy the city had lain concealed. It was a sight to appall any heart where faith did not triumph; and it is a proof of the extraordinary courage with which they were now inspired, that they advanced calmly and confidently to an enterprise seemingly so desperate. W. G. B.

2. See, I have given into thine hand Jericho. Not, "*I will do it, but, I have done it*;" it is all thine own, as sure as if it were already in thy possession." It was designed that this city, being the first-fruits of Canaan, should be entirely devoted to God, and that neither Joshua nor Israel should ever be one mite the richer for it, and yet it is here said to be *given into their hand*, for we must reckon that most our own, which we have an opportunity of honoring God with and employing in his service. H.

3. Jehovah appointed this method of besieging the city, (1) To show both to the Canaanites and to Israel that Omnipotence alone had achieved the work, that he was infinitely above the need of the ordinary means of obtaining a victory, and to render those of his enemies inexcusable who should withstand his resistless arm. (2) To try the faith and obedience of Joshua and his people, by prescribing a course of conduct that seemed to human wisdom the height of folly and absurdity. (3) To put honor upon the ark as the appointed token of his presence, and to confirm still more fully that veneration and awe with which they had always been taught to regard it. Bush.

4. It is the pleasure of God to hold us both in work and in expectation, and though he require our continual endeavors for the subduing of our corruptions, during the six days of our life, yet we shall never find it perfectly effected till the very evening of our last day.

12-14. There was never so strange a siege

as this of Jericho: here was no mount raised, no sword drawn, no engine planted, no pioneers undermining; here were trumpets sounded, but no enemy seen; here were armed men, but no stroke given: they must walk and not fight; seven several days must they pace about the walls, which they may not once look over to see what was within. Bp. H.

Here also, as in the crossing of the Jordan, the ark of the covenant appears in the foreground. Seven priests surround it with rams' horns. Its place is assigned between the battalions that precede and those that follow and bring up the rear. The whole armed host of Israel is put in motion—one half to precede and the other to follow the sacred ark and its attendant priests. The first day they march around the city once, the priests blowing their rams' horns, but every human tongue silent; and return to their camp for the night. Five more days they encompass the city daily in the same marching order—all silent save the horn-blowing. H. C.

The sacred writer continues to emphasize the precision with which the divine directions were followed day after day throughout each of the six days, and finally on the seventh. All this time elapsed without any apparent result. The walls of Jericho stood as firm at the end of the sixth day as at the beginning of the first, and so until the last circuit had been completed on the seventh day. It might have seemed to the incredulous among the people that all this wearisome marching to and fro was a useless expenditure of time and strength. And yet the Lord of set purpose postponed to the seventh day what he might with equal ease have accomplished on the first. And he required the people to make these numerous circuits about the city, when he might as easily have thrown down the walls of the city without their having compassed it at all. It was intended to test their faith and patience. Only by continuing steadfast to the end they obtained the blessing. It is further observable that the task assigned to each day was promptly performed, without postponement or procrastination. W. H. G.

Only the blare of the trumpets was heard. The host tramped on in grim silence, watched by wondering crowds on the walls, round whose hearts terror would begin to steal at the very strangeness of the thing. The apparent aimlessness, the restraint which confined itself to the one circuit as round a doomed thing daily, the dead silence of the ranks, the blare of the shrill trumpets, would all help to strike awe and kindle expectation of something terrible to fol-

low these silent, slow, inexplicable parades. The morning sun of the seventh day (probably the Sabbath) had barely risen over the eastern hills, when the procession set out once more from the camp ; for a long day's work was before them. Six times the silent march was wound round the doomed city,—a task of many hours ; and expectation would be beginning to flag, both among the watchers from the walls and the wearied Israelites, when suddenly, in the seventh circuit, Joshua's voice, vibrating with excitement, rung out above the trumpets, "Shout ; for the Lord hath given you the city !" From all the host one fierce triumphant shout made amends for a week of silence, and summoned the vultures to "eat the flesh of kings and captains." Surely, never did faith speak in such strange tones as in that hoarse roar ; but it did speak, and therefore the walls, which unbelief had reported as reaching well-nigh "up to heaven," fell "in their place ;" that is, in solid masses, so that each man of the encircling host had but to turn a quarter round and march straight on. A. M.

All suddenly the entire wall of the city is flat upon the ground. Wheeling toward the city from every point, armed men rush over the fallen walls ; with sword and fire they lay the city utterly desolate. All its silver and gold, all its vessels of brass and of iron, are consecrated to the Lord and come into his treasury ; all else was doomed to destruction. Jericho is no more ! Its fall gave new impulse to the panic which shook the stoutest hearts among the men of Canaan. They could not but see that a new power was among them and that their city walls were of no particular account before this strange people. We may imagine how anxiously they are saying, Who can stand before this unknown enemy and their more wonderful and wonder-working God ? H. C.—Vain worldlings think their ramparts and barricades can keep out the vengeance of God ; their blindness suffers them to look no farther than the means : the supreme hand of the Almighty comes not within the compass of their fears. Every carnal heart is a Jericho shut up ; God sits down before it, and displays mercy and judgment in sight of the walls thereof ; it hardens itself in a wilful security, and saith, "I shall never be moved." *Bp. II.*

Not till the seventh day, and not till they have compassed the city seven times on the seventh day, these walls come down. Here then is not only obedience rewarded and faith encouraged, here is patience honored, here is perseverance crowned. The God of heaven speaks to us from

above that prostrate city, and tells us that not through faith only, but through faith and patience, we must inherit the promises. C. B.—It is not "ours to reason why," but to obey. If we trust God, we shall do as he bids us, though little seems to come of it. The blood-cemented walls of many a robber city, which has long afflicted humanity, have to be compassed many weary times, and generations have to pass, before God says, "Now shout !" It is a slow task to leaven society with the principles of the Gospel, which will destroy deeply-rooted and long-continued abuses. But we have to "keep pegging away," to use Abraham Lincoln's homespun heroic phrase. If we can do no more, we can at least blow the trumpet which proclaims that God is here and summons Jericho to surrender. If we have to die before the seventh day comes, no matter. We shall have our share in the triumph all the same, and, wherever we are, shall hear the great shout which tells the fall of the bloody city, "to be found no more at all." A. M.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Faith, then, is a power. She plants her foot upon a sure foundation ; she grapples with her difficulties, and, in the end, she conquers. The man who believes can trust : his faith sees God, and that sight creates confidence. The man who trusts can ignore or resist present and visible danger, through his clear perceptions of an Unseen Protector ; and his trust is, of itself, a force, whether for purposes of action or purposes of resistance. Upon any supposition, the agency of faith on this occasion was limited to its determined reliance and hold upon the unseen agency of God, who, whether through some natural law or independently, effected the downfall of the walls. The power of faith is the same ; if it does not itself act, it accepts the conditions of action which are prescribed by the real Agent ; it thereby, we may dare to say it, puts His arm in motion ; it acts—but through Him. H. P. L.

The one victorious power is that of absolute confidence in God's help. Men in whom that burns go flaming through antagonism and consuming wickedness. There is nothing which silences opposition and kindles like confidence so surely as a soul all possessed by it. Eloquence, learning, strategy, organizing power, machinery, and wise methods, are all very good ; but an ounce of faith is worth a ton of them when the question is how the walls of Jericho are to be got down. It will beget these qualities, they will never produce it. Mark how faith conquers. It does so by bringing the might of

God into the field. Faith is not the battering-ram which beats down the walls, but only the hand which swings the ram. God's power is, if we may say so, set loose to work through our faith ; and that faith is mighty, because it opens the door for the entrance of his omnipotence. The slow marches round and round the doomed city, and the war-cry, at last did not effect the capture ; but they were the tokens of the faith which brought into play the power which did. A. M.

Faith in our days must be based on the Word of God. Then we may follow its guidance without fear. It will never lead us astray. But there is much that is called faith that has no better foundation than mere human opinion, or even folly. Spiritualism is of this type. Much of the "faith healing" of the day belongs to this category, and many of the singular faiths of the day are nothing more or less than credulity. That faith is always sure that has a "thus saith the Lord" before it goes ahead, but when it has this, it moves on without consulting with flesh and blood ; in fact, it has to do this, for flesh and blood cannot see by the eye of faith. It is perfectly possible for us to have sometimes to act in a way that seems absurd to the natural man—as when we make great sacrifices for the cause of the Master. In matters of this kind, we are to study the Word carefully, to pray earnestly, and then to risk all boldly. Then our Jerichos will begin to come down on every hand. Until then they will stand as securely as when we first crossed the river into the land of promise. *Schauffler.*

The two features, so vividly brought out here, of the protracted preparations and of the sudden final catastrophe, mark all God's temporal and national judgments. The materials for the explosion are slowly gathered, grain by grain, and centuries may pass before the pile is complete ; at every moment of which his pleading voice might be heard, and repentance and reformation might disperse the dangerous accumulation. But when the match is applied, the flash and clap and ruin are crowded into a moment. The slow minute-hand creeps round the dial for a long silent hour ; but when it reaches the sixtieth of the seconds, in each of which it might have been stopped, the bell rings out, and all is over. God waits, that men may turn ; but if they do not turn, God strikes, and the stroke is mortal. Now, all this is as true under the Gospel as it was in the days of Joshua. The message of love does not contradict the divine justice, from destructive contact with which Christ delivers by his death. Nor does

the Gospel only confirm the teaching of judgment, but it intensifies it, revealing a "much sorer punishment" as impending over us than that which overwhelmed the men of Jericho. The imagery under which Paul prophesies the day of final judgment sounds like an intentional allusion to this narrative when he says that the Lord himself shall come "with a shout . . . and with the trump of God." But, however that may be, the truth concerning God, which the fall of the little city among its palm-trees taught so long ago, is a truth to-day, confirmed and heightened by the perfect revelation in Christ. . . . The sweep of the revelation then given discloses a side of the divine nature of which this generation is impatient ; namely, his punitive destructive energy. The men of Jericho, like all the inhabitants of the land, were corrupt beyond recovery. Their "iniquity was full," and the hour of retribution had struck. Therefore God's hand let loose this fiery torrent on them, as truly as he did the lava and bitumen on Sodom. It is a sad and solemn sight, but it is part of the long history by which God makes himself known to us ; and its teaching is of a permanent, not of a transient nor antiquated, phase of his activity. Many a time since, though not in the same directly miraculous way, he has done similar things. The long agony of the Gothic invasion, the triumphant rush of Mohammedanism in a century from Delhi in the east to Cordova in the west, and later catastrophes, preach the same message, that "the history of the world is the judgment of the world." If God makes himself known by his doings as men do, the dream of a God whose love is so flaccid that he cannot punish is baseless. A. M.

What is the historical manifestation of Christianity but one long procession around the walls of Jericho, in which the means employed seem to be altogether unequal to achieving that which nevertheless they do in a measure achieve ? What is it but a prolonged contrast between the ideal and the actual, between the anticipated and the real ? That traceable order and proportion of cause and effect, that array of powerful influences and of commanding personages who achieve striking and magnificent results in the field of secular history, seems constantly to be wanting in the history of the Church, which thus presents us with a continual paradox, that we may look for its explanation beyond the realm of sense. Yes ; now, as at the first, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are" mighty. H. P. L.

17. The city must be burned, and all the

lives in it sacrificed without mercy to the justice of God. All this they knew was included in the words (verse 17), The city shall be a *cherem*, a devoted thing, it and all therein, to the Lord ; no life in it might be ransomed upon any terms, they must all be surely *put to death* (Lev. 27 : 29). So He appoints, from whom as creatures they had received their lives, and to whom as sinners they had forfeited them ; and who may dispute his sentence ? There was more of God seen in the taking of Jericho, than of any other of the cities of Canaan, and therefore that must be more than any other devoted to him. And the severe usage of this city would strike a terror upon all the rest, and melt their hearts yet more before Israel. H.—This city was the first fruits of Canaan, and as such wholly devoted to the Lord. The spoil of other cities, subsequently taken, was allowed to be divided among the captors, but this was to be an exception to the general rule. **18. And trouble it.** Bring distress upon it by provoking the divine displeasure. This is spoken as if in foresight of the sin of Achan, to whom Joshua afterward said (ch. 7 : 25), “ Why hast thou troubled us ? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.” From hence he is called *Achar*, trouble (1 Chron. 2 : 7). *Bush.*—We must learn of God that there is a punishing mercy. Cursed be that mercy that opposes the God of merey.

22, 23. Yet was not Joshua so intent upon the slaughter, as not to be mindful of God’s part, and Rahab’s : first, he gives charge (under a curse) of reserving all the treasure for God ; then, of preserving the family of Rahab. Those two spies that received life from her, now return it to her and hers : they call at the window with the red cord ; and send up news of life to her the same way which they received theirs : her house is no part of Jericho ; neither may fire be set to any building of that city till Rahab and her family be set safe without the host. The actions of our faith and charity will be sure to pay us ; if late, yet surely. Now Rahab finds what it is to believe God ; while, out of an impure idolatrous city, she is transplanted into the Church of God and made a mother of a royal and holy posterity. *Bp. H.*—Joshua is a type of Christ in an act of grace which he exercised, and that to his enemy Rahab. Why have we at once a sinful woman spared and admitted into covenant on her faith, nay privileged in the event to become the ancestress of our Lord, except that in Joshua the reign of the Saviour is typified, and that the pardon of a sinner is its most appropriate attendant ? *Newman.*

Dwelleth in Israel. As a communicant

and partaker of all the distinguishing privileges of the chosen seed. **Unto this day.** A strong proof that the book was written *in or near the time* to which it refers, and in all probability by Joshua himself. *Bush.*—The blessing which followed Rahab for her conduct is recorded as the greatest example of *faith* and of the *works* which spring from faith, in the old heathen world. Her mind and heart received in simple faith the proofs of Jehovah’s power and purposes ; she served his people with courage, ingenuity, and devotion ; and so she “ entered into the kingdom of God.” She was rewarded by a most distinguished place among the families of Israel. She married Salmon (perhaps one of the spies), and became the mother of Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. Hers is thus one of the four female names, all of them foreigners, recorded in the genealogy of Christ ; and it is one of the profoundest moral, as well as spiritual, lessons of His Gospel, that He did not disdain such an ancestry.

26. Joshua imprecated a solemn curse on the man who should *rebuild* Jericho. The curse was literally fulfilled in the fate of Hiel, the Bethelite, who rebuilt Jericho in the reign of Ahab : his first-born son, Abiram, died as he was laying the foundation, and his youngest son, Segub, while he was setting up the gates (1 K. 16 : 34). *P. S.*—He would have it to remain in its ruins a standing monument of his wrath against the Canaanites, when the measure of their iniquity was full ; and of his merey to his people, when the time was come for their settlement in Canaan. H.—This curse was pronounced on the *builder* of Jericho, not on those who might inhabit it after it was built : for in aftertimes it was inhabited without scruple. Indeed this place was afterward famous on many accounts. Here the prophet sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it and the neighboring countries ; here Herod built a sumptuous palace ; this was the dwelling-place of Zacchæus, and was honored with the presence of Christ, who vouchsafed to work some miracles here. *Bp. Patrick, Stackhouse.*

Joshua could not have preserved that simplicity and gentleness which, side by side with a soldier’s bold daring, make up his character, unless all mere earthly feelings had been wholly overpowered by the sense that, as directly as the earthquake or the pestilence, he was God’s simple instrument in sweeping from the earth a long-tried, long-endured, but incurably abominable race. This was the lesson Joshua had from the first to learn. This great truth, as a

talisman for his own safety, sunk into his spirit as he gazed on those heaped-up streams of Jordan and stood unshaken amid the dust and din and terror of the falling walls of Jericho. He moved amid these scenes of blood as an avenging angel might hover over them—the doer of the Will of the Holy One, untainted by human passion, and full even in his unswerving zeal for God of a terrible gentleness. We read all that in his fatherly sympathy with the offending Achan, even while he condemned to be burned with fire the great transgressor, who had brought himself and his under the ban of God. Only in the spirit in which Joshua wrought them can we read aright his mighty deeds; and so read, they are rich in instruction which we most deeply need. We who live in these later days can see that the whole history of man hung upon the issue of those battles in the plain of Jericho and on the hills of Beth Horon. What other conflicts have ever decided so much for humanity? Joshua stood on those fields of blood, the very world-hero, bearing with him all its destinies. *Wilberforce*.

The fall of Jericho was an example of the power of simple obedience to plans of action prescribed by God, and an earnest of the conquests to be achieved by the same principle. And this is true also of the destruction of the city. Not only as the first which the Israelites took, but as perhaps the most conspicuous city of Canaan for the advantages of its position, its commerce, wealth, and luxury, and unquestionably also for the abominable vices that had now “filled up the iniquity of the Canaanites,” its doom was the pattern of that denounced on the cities of the land. P. S.

The ark of the covenant strongly symbolized the Gospel. There was the recognition of the personality and presence of God; there was his perfect law; there, too, was sinful and sinning man’s covenant to keep it; there the seat of mercy and pardon, approached only with ceremonies and offerings indicative of the principle of the cross in its subjective operations. And this ark is the focal point of interest in the siege of Jericho. The city yielded not to soldiers, but to priests; to priests, moreover, in the capacity of heralds blowing “trumpets of jubilee;” or, rather, to the ark of the covenant which they heralded; or, more strictly still, to the Gospel,—the covenant of grace proclaimed,—which the ark could only symbolize. Thus we see that the salvation of God’s truth to us is no mere natural evolution, but that even at Jericho, in the first aggressive step in the con-

quest of Canaan, God through symbolic events testifies that this bloody conquest is but the prophetic shadow of a holy war whose consummation awaited only the growing spiritual possibilities of man, and that the Gospel plan was planned from the beginning? *Cable*.

The grand miracles of the dividing of the Jordan and the fall of Jericho’s walls formed part of the same series of miracles which began with the plagues of Egypt, and was continued in the dividing of the Red Sea, the guidance of the cloud, and the daily furnishing of the manna. It was the period of founding a great church by the God of Salvation, and he surrounded its founding with glorious evidences, as afterward he surrounded the founding of the Christian Church, its development, with like miraculous evidences for the conviction of mankind. We should look just to such epochs as those in which marvels from God’s hand should be dealt out to the world. *Crosby*.—This story is a story of national progress. It is also one of supernatural progress. For us the supernatural is, in the highest and truest sense of the word, natural, for it is the revelation of the nature of God. We accept the possibility of the supernatural and miraculous, but all the more for that do we hold that if God interferes in the affairs of men miraculously, He will not do it capriciously, unnecessarily, wantonly. Upon the whole story of these Jewish miracles there is stamped a character which marks distinctly the reason for which they were wrought; that reason was the religious education of the world. By these miracles the Jew was taught that for nations and men there is a God, an eternal and a personal Will above us and around us, that works for righteousness. This great fact was taught him by illustrated lessons, by pictures illuminated with the Divine light and so filled with the Divine color that they stand and last for all time. *Bp. Magee*.

It lies on the surface of the Scriptural narrative that “a notable miracle,” unparalleled in history, had in this case been “wrought” by Jehovah for Israel. As a German writer puts it: It would have been impossible to show it more clearly, that Jehovah had *given* the city to Israel. First, the river was made to recede, to allow them entrance into the land; and now the walls of the city were made to fall, to give them admission to its first and strongest city. Now such proofs of the presence and help of Jehovah, so soon after Moses’ death, must have convinced the most carnal among Israel that the same God who had cleft the Red Sea before their fathers was still on their side. And in this light must the event also have been viewed by the people

of Canaan. But, besides, a deeper symbolical meaning attached to all that had happened. The first and strongest fortress in the land Jehovah God bestowed upon His people, so to speak, as a free gift, without their having to make any effort, or to run any risk in taking it. A precious pledge this of the ease with which all His gracious promises were to be fulfilled. Similarly, the manner in which Israel obtained possession of Jericho was deeply significant. Evidently, the walls of Jericho fell, not before Israel, but before the Ark of Jehovah, or rather, as it is expressly said in verse 8, before Jehovah Himself, whose presence among His people was connected with the Ark of the Covenant. And the blast of those jubilee-horns all around the doomed city made proclamation of Jehovah, and was, so to speak, the summons of His kingdom, proclaiming that the labor and sorrow of His people were at an end, and they about to enter upon their inheritance. This was the symboli-

cal and typical import of the blasts of the jubilee-horns, whenever they were blown. Hence also alike in the visions of the prophets and in the New Testament the final advent of the kingdom of God is heralded by the trumpet-sound of His angelic messengers (comp. 1 Cor. 15 : 52 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 16 ; Rev. 20 and 21). But, on the other hand, the advent of the kingdom of God always implies destruction to His enemies. Accordingly, the walls of Jericho must fall, and all the city be destroyed. Lastly, it was fitting that Jericho should have been *entirely* devoted unto the Lord ; not only that Israel might gain no immediate spoil by what the Lord had done, but also because the city, as the firstfruits of the conquest of the land, belonged unto Jehovah, just as all the first, both in His people and in all that was theirs, was His—in token that the whole was really God's property, who gave everything to His people, and at whose hands they held their possessions. A. E.

Section 208.

EXTERMINATION OF THE IDOLATROUS CITIES OF CANAAN. ITS JUSTIFICATION FROM VARIOUS POINTS OF VIEW.

CENTURIES before, Divine wisdom had made choice of this favored region as the abode of his people, among whom his name and worship should be perpetuated. In calling Abraham to this land, and giving it to him and his posterity, God claimed and exercised his right so to give it. That he might certify the gift to all, and himself as the giver, he recorded his name upon it. For Abraham, on his entrance into the land under Divine direction, and at his first halting-place, nearly in the geographical centre of the country, erected an altar to Jehovah (Gen. 12 : 7). Wherever he halted for a time in his subsequent journeyings, and fixed his temporary abode, he "built there an altar to Jehovah, and called on the name of Jehovah" (ch. 12 : 8. See chs. 13 : 4, 18 ; 21 : 33.) A like record is given of Isaac (26 : 25), and of Jacob (33 : 20). Centuries had now passed, and all was changed. The germs of idolatry had reached their complete development. They had effaced every vestige of Jehovah's name and worship, and in place of them were the worst abominations of heathenism. Thus this favored land, chosen of God to perpetuate his name and worship, and hallowed by his altars, was now

wrested from its purpose, and his altars everywhere supplanted by those of false gods. Idolatry, with its polluting and de-humanizing rites, had taken such hold of the popular mind, infusing its poison into all the relations and conditions of life, from infancy to age, that nothing short of extirpation would uproot and totally destroy the deadly evil. This was expressly commanded in Nu. 33 : 51-53, and De. 20 : 16-18. It is enough that God commanded it, and had the right to command it. But it was no arbitrary mandate. Its justice is clearly manifest from what has already been said. Its wisdom is no less evident, as the necessary means of the highest good, both to that age and to all succeeding ones. *Conant.*

The Old Testament knows no other ground for the assignment of the land to Israel than the free grace of Jehovah, to whom it belonged ; and no other ground for the blotting out of the Canaanite tribes than the divine justice, which, after these tribes have filled up the measure of their sins in unnatural abominations, breaks in at last in vengeance, after long waiting. But Israel is threatened with exactly the same judgment if it become guilty of the sins of the tribes

on whom it executes the divine judgment with the sword. O.

In reading the Old Testament account of the Jewish wars and conquests in Canaan, and the terrible destruction brought upon the inhabitants, we are constantly to bear in mind that we are reading the execution of a dreadful but just sentence, pronounced by God against the intolerable and incorrigible crimes of these nations—that they were intended to be made an example to the whole world of God's avenging wrath against sins of this magnitude and this kind; sins which, if they had been suffered to continue, might have polluted the whole ancient world, and which could only be checked by the signal and public overthrow of nations notoriously addicted to them, so addicted as to have incorporated them even into their religion and their public institutions; that the miseries inflicted upon the nations by the invasion of the Jews were expressly declared to be inflicted on account of their abominable sins—that God had borne with them long: that God did not proceed to execute his judgments till their wickedness was full: that the Israelites were mere instruments in the hands of a righteous providence for the extermination of a people whom it was necessary to make a public example to the rest of mankind: that this extermination, which might have been accomplished by a pestilence, by fire, by earthquakes, was appointed to be done by the hands of the Israelites as being the clearest and most intelligible method of displaying the power and righteousness of the God of Israel; his power over the pretended gods of other nations and his righteous hatred of the crimes into which they were fallen. *Paley.*

The character of the nations to be extirpated furnishes the reason of the Divine procedure toward them; and that the total extirpation of a pre-eminently wicked race is in no respect more opposed to Divine justice than was the destruction of the world by a deluge, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven, will hardly be questioned. Other instances of the destruction of tribes and nations, however different the agency by which it has been effected from that in the present case, and the others adverted to, are of frequent occurrence in the world's history. Further, and more particularly, experience abundantly confirms the testimony of Scripture, that God employs men, as well as inferior agencies, for the accomplishment of his purposes, whether of good or evil. Individuals have a mission, and so also have nations, and God employs them often, unconsciously to

themselves, and even contrary to their intentions, as the instruments of his wrath, and when they have fulfilled their destiny, arms in turn other powers against them. This is the voice of universal history, and of Scripture history in particular, which discovers the most hidden springs of actions, and the will which directs all affairs. In these matters God not merely permits—for this were to take a low view of the Divine government, one utterly inadequate to explain the various phenomena of Providence—He arranges all events, and regulates all their issues. If, then, God does employ men as the unconscious ministers of His will, can He not also legitimate a people as righteous instruments of punishment? If God can and does employ an instrumentality of destruction acting from its own will, and for the accomplishment of its own ends, without any respect to the Divine will, and which on that account is guilty, can He not also employ an instrumentality which, acting under his sole and supreme authority, shall be guiltless of wrong? This is the precise point to which the present question is reduced; and it is with this rather than with the assumed injurious consequences to the conscious instruments so employed, that the objector has to deal. D. M.

Far greater empires have been given to destruction than that of the Canaanites. In most cases they fell by their own vices as the prime cause. All historians are so agreed and have pointed the moral for succeeding nations. Instead of denouncing the arrangement by which nations die of profligacy as individual sinners do, they have noted the warning lesson and recognized its value. The Old Testament historian does precisely the same. He tells us the Canaanites were so dreadfully depraved they had to be destroyed. *W. E. Knox.*

God suffered the Canaanites to remain there until they had forfeited their title not to Canaan alone, but to life itself and to any further national existence. This point is too vital to be passed without careful attention. In Lev. 18 we meet with a series of crimes against moral purity—violations of the seventh commandment—culminating in sodomy and bestiality; and classed with these is the burning of children in the worship of Moloch (verse 21). Then God says—"Defile not yourselves in any of these things; for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you, and *the land is defiled*; therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." The same sentiments are repeated (verses 26-30). Unnatural lusts had sunk

both men and women not only down to a level with beasts, but even below them. Idolatry had so far quenched the sweet humanities from the parental heart that fathers and mothers could burn their own sons and daughters to Moloch. These horrible, unnatural crimes were not only an outrage against the heart of God the Great Father; but, as he forcibly puts it, they defiled the very land itself. What could a holy and righteous God do with such a people but wipe them out of existence and wash the land they had defiled clean of such pollutions? Lev. 20 reiterates substantially the same list of abominations against which God warns his people. Perfectly definite and explicit is the repetition of the same point in De. 12 : 30, 31, and 18 : 9-14. A people so given up to devil-worship as to burn their own offspring at his supposed behest, must be too debased and corrupt to live! The earth itself cries out against them, demanding their utter extirpation!

Such a war as that of Israel against the Canaanites, waged in obedience to God, waged for the destruction of such sinners and to cleanse the earth from such unutterable abominations and pollutions, is *not* demoralizing—is not so either necessarily or even naturally; but if done in honest obedience to God and with a due sense of the grounds on which God commanded it, must have been the very opposite of demoralizing; must have educated the nation of Israel to a juster sense of the abominations of idolatry and of the righteous moral government of God over the wicked in the present world. It cannot be doubted that these were the ends which God sought to secure in putting this service upon Israel. A lower object to be reached was to vacate the land of Canaan for Israel to occupy; but the far higher object was to wash the land of its moral pollutions; to break down and blot out nations too corrupt to live. The Lord devolved this extirpation upon Israel that they might thereby get a deeper sense of his abhorrence of such sin—not to say also, a juster view of the intrinsic abominations which God commissioned them to punish. H. C.

“Defile not ye in any of these things,” God had said, “that the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you; I am the Lord your God!” How much more striking would this warning become for them from the fact that they had been the instruments of a judgment similar to that with which they themselves had been threatened! Did not each blow they dealt in this war with the Canaanites speak their own

death sentence if they ever should morally assimilate themselves with the guilty nations? *Godel.*

That God is as severe in his dealings with sin in his own people as in his enemies is a point which is surely of great moment. If severe in punishing these wicked nations, God is not less sparing of Israel when it follows in their ways and does what is wrong. We think here of the destruction of thousands of their number for the sin of the golden calf, and for the sin of Baal-peor; of the plagues, fiery serpents, etc., which chastised them for disobedience; and of their defeat at Ai. There is with God no respect of persons; and if one can believe in his love to Israel notwithstanding these inflictions, he may believe in his love and justice notwithstanding the punishments inflicted on the sinful nations around. *Orr.*

This wholesale execution was not merely just as regards the irretrievably corrupted tribes which were the objects of it; it was equally indispensable on account of the state of moral weakness of the Hebrew nation that was called to take their place. On the one hand, inclined toward idolatry, like all the other nations; on the other, charged with the grand mission of maintaining and propagating monotheism, how could Israel have accomplished its task had it been forced to incorporate with itself all the Canaanites of the Holy Land? The work of God would thereby have become wholly impossible. Either the plan of God for the salvation of mankind was to fail, or those who were ripe for judgment were to perish. *Godel.*—The alternative was either an unrelenting hostility, or a compromise and a mingling of the Hebrews and idolaters, which must have resulted in the extinguishment of the light of truth, dim as it was, of which the former were possessed. Had the world been different from what it was, had the Hebrews been different—more firm in their faith, more enlightened—the alternative would not have existed. But it did exist; and the preservation of true religion in its germs, our Christian civilization to-day, are dependent upon the course that was actually taken, revolting as it would be to humane feeling, if repeated at a later day and under altered circumstances. Had the Canaanites been spared, the historic stream, narrow and turbid as it then was, would have been choked up or turned out of its channel, instead of flowing on in a broader and clearer current, until, at a point far remote from its source, it issued in a pure Christian theism, the life of our civilization.

All this is clear to the historical student, what-

ever may be his creed, who values the Christian religion, and discerns the genetic connection of events. We must conclude that the extirpation of the Canaanites, the only means by which the contagion of their idolatry and sensuality could be avoided—"terrible surgery" though it was, to borrow language of Carlyle in speaking of another matter—was yet a part of the wise and beneficent order of Providence. We must conclude, also, that it was the fruit of the highest religious impulses of the people who were charged with the seed of what is most precious in modern religion and civilization. Were this the whole case, we should have to say that the excesses springing from the untamed religious zeal of an uncivilized people were overruled by Providence, educing good out of partial evil, in subservience to a far-sighted plan for the salvation of the human race. But if we bring in, as an additional element, the manifested will of God, as the warrant for their proceeding, they are raised to the level of executioners, not merely of a permissive, providential appointment, but of a direct commandment. It becomes an instance where human agency is employed for the infliction of divine judgment, the agent consciously acting as the instrument of divine justice.

How can such a commandment, enjoining indiscriminate massacre, be consistent with the divine attributes? As far as the consequences are concerned, the destruction of life, there is no greater difficulty than exists in the case of a hurricane or a plague, which sweeps away myriads of both sexes and of all ages. As far as the effect upon the actors is concerned there is no offence done to the moral sense; there is no such departure from the common ideas, the accepted laws of war and conquest in that age, as would produce a moral deterioration in the Israelites themselves. Rather is it true, that feeling themselves to be deputies of the Supreme Power for the execution of penalties and for the carrying out of a plan not their own, they would perform their stern work with a kind of sacred enthusiasm, unlike the base feeling of malice and revenge, as for a private injury, and impressed at every step with their own exposure to a like retribution in case they trod in the path of those whom they were commanded to destroy. If they were used as a flail and a scourge, the victims of their hostility suffered no heavier calamity than has been visited by the will of Providence upon many a corrupt and enervated nation, which has been crushed under the foot of the invader; while for the Israelites themselves a wall was built up around them

against the pollutions of heathenism, and a sense of the guilt and peril of apostacy was gained, which their whole subsequent history proves that they could not afford to spare. *Fisher.*

Seen historically—estimated in the light of the facts of the case, this method *was morally impressive, instructive, elevating, wholesome.* That man reads the history of the heroic age of Israel very imperfectly who does not see in it ample demonstration that staunch obedience to God in this matter of war against the idolatrous, corrupt Canaanites, fostered piety, developed Christian heroism and toned up the standard of morality. When they compromised, accepted tribute, and tried their own policy of living side by side with such idolaters instead of God's policy of vigorous extermination, then came disaster, religious decline, and most perilous moral corruption. The great conflict of those early ages between God and Satan was fought on the point of idolatry—the real question being whether God or the devil should have the worship of men; whether the supremacy and the moral right to rule the world are with God or with Satan. This being the great conflict of the ages, it should not surprise us that God should let Israel's land of promise be in a sort the battle-ground, and should bring into play the physical force of arms and let his covenant people come into the fight hand to hand against the hosts of his foes. H. C.

Let us but think what might have been our fate, and the fate of every other nation under heaven at this hour, had the sword of the Israelites done its work more sparingly. Even as it was, the small portions of the Canaanites who were left, and the nations around them, so tempted the Israelites by their idolatrous practices, that we read continually of the whole people of God turning away from his service. But had the heathen lived in the land in equal numbers, and, still more, had they intermarried largely with the Israelites, how was it possible, humanly speaking, that any sparks of the light of God's truth should have survived to the coming of Christ? Would not the Israelites have lost all their peculiar character? and if they had retained the name of Jehovah as of their God, would they not have formed as unworthy notions of his attributes, and worshipped him with a worship as abominable, as that which the Moabites paid to Chemosh, or the Philistines to Dagon? But this was not to be, and therefore the nations of Canaan were to be cut off utterly. The Israelites' sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the coun-

tries of the earth to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, those perpetual contests with the Canaanites, and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines, with which the Books of Joshua, and Judges, and Samuel, are almost filled. But in these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought, not for themselves only, but for us. They did God's work; they preserved, unhurt, the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it. *Arnold.*

Popular critics of the morality of the Old Testament apply the coarsest possible arguments to this subject. They think it enough to point to a rude penal law, to a barbarous custom, to an extirpating warfare, and it at once follows that this is the morality of the Bible; but this is to judge the sculptor from the broken fragment of stone. It was not the morality of the Bible unless it was the morality of the Bible as a whole, and the whole is tested by the end and not by the beginning. Scripture was progressive: it went from lower stage to higher, and as it rose from one stage to another it blotted out the commands of an inferior standard and substituted the commands of a higher standard. This was the nature of the dispensation as being progressive; it was the essential operation of the Divine government as it acted in that period of the world. The dispensation, then, as a whole, did not command the extermination of the Canaanites, but a subordinate step did; and this step passed from use and sight as a higher was attained. The fact, though instructive as past history, became obsolete, and was left behind as a present lesson; and the dispensation in its own nature was represented by its end. The very lower steps led to the end, and were for the sake of leading to it. The critic adheres to a class of commands which existed for the moment, as facts of the day; but the turning point is the issue, and the whole can only be interpreted by the event. The morality of Scripture is the morality of the end of Scripture; it is the last standard reached, and what everything else led up to. *Mozley.*

Principles involved identical with those of the New Testament.

We affirm that, if contemplated in the broad and comprehensive light in which Scripture itself presents them to our view, there is not an essential element belonging to these statements which does not equally enter into the

principles of the Gospel dispensation; and that any difference which may here present itself between the Old and the New is, as in all other cases, a difference merely in form, but founded upon an essential agreement. This will appear whether it is viewed in respect to the Canaanites, to the Israelites, or to the times of the Gospel dispensation. Viewed, first of all, in respect to the Canaanites as the execution of deserved judgment on their sins (in which light Scripture uniformly represents it, so far as *they* are concerned), there is nothing in it to offend the feelings of any well-constituted Christian mind. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, God appears as the righteous Judge and avenger of sin, and does so not unfrequently by the infliction of fearful things in righteousness. If we can contemplate Him bringing on the cities of the plain the vengeance of eternal fire, because their sins had waxed great and were come up to heaven; or, at a later period, even in Gospel times, can reflect how the wrath was made to fall on the Jewish nation to the uttermost;—if we can contemplate such things entering into the administration of God, without any disturbance to our convictions that the Judge of all the earth does only what is right, it were surely unreasonable to complain of the severities exercised on the foul inhabitants of Canaan. Their abominations were of a kind that might be said emphatically to cry to Heaven—such idolatrous rites as tended to defile their very consciences, and the habitual practice of pollutions which were a disgrace to humanity. The land is represented as incapable of bearing any longer the mass of defilements which overspread it, as even “vomiting out its inhabitants;” and “therefore,” it is added, “the Lord visited their iniquity upon them.” Nor was this vengeance taken on them summarily: the time of judgment was preceded by a long season of forbearance, during which they were plied with many calls to repentance. But as all proved in vain, mercy at length gave place to judgment, according to the principle common alike to all dispensations: “He that, being often reprovèd, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.” In plain terms, whenever iniquity has reached its last stage, the judgment of Heaven is at hand. This principle was as strikingly exemplified in the case of the Jews after our Lord's appearing as in the case of these Canaanites before. In the parables of the barren fig-tree and the wicked husbandmen in the vineyard, the same place is assigned it in the Christian dispensation which it formerly held in the Jewish. And in the ex-

perience of all who, despite of merciful invitations and solemn threatenings, perish from the way of life, it must find an attestation so much more appalling than the one now referred to, as a lost eternity exceeds in evil the direst calamities of time. In fine, the very same may be said of the objections brought against the destruction of the Canaanites, which was said by Richard Baxter of many of the controversies started in his day: "The true root of all the difference is, whether there be a God and a life to come." Grant only a moral government and a time of retribution, and such cases as those under consideration become not only just, but necessary.

Again, let the judgment executed upon the Canaanites be viewed in respect to the instruments employed in enforcing it—the Israelites—and in this aspect also nothing will be found in it at variance with the great principles of truth and righteousness. The commission given to the Israelites was limited to the one task of sweeping the land of Canaan of its original occupants. But this manifestly conferred on them no right to deal out the same measure of severity to others; and so far from creating a thirst for human blood, in cases where they had no authority to shed it, they even fainted in fulfilling their commission to extirpate the people of Canaan. This, however, is only the negative side of the question; and viewed in another and more positive aspect, the employment of the Israelites to execute this work of judgment was eminently calculated to produce a salutary impression upon their minds, and to promote the ends for which the judgment was appointed. For what could be conceived so thoroughly fitted to implant in their hearts an abiding conviction of the evil of idolatry and its foul abominations—to convert their abhorrence of these into a national, permanent characteristic—as their being obliged to enter on their settled inheritance by a terrible infliction of judgment upon its former occupants for polluting it with such enormities? Thus the very foundations of their national existence raised a solemn warning against defection from the pure worship of God; and the visitation of divine wrath against the ungodliness of men accomplished by their own hands, and interwoven with the records of their history at its most eventful period, stood as a perpetual witness against them, if they should ever turn aside to folly. Happy had it been for them, if they had been as careful to remember the lesson as God was to have it suitably impressed upon their minds.

But the propriety and even moral necessity

of the course pursued become manifest, when we view the proceeding in its typical bearing—the respect it had to Gospel times. There were reasons, as we have seen, connected with the Canaanites themselves and the surrounding nations, sufficient to justify the whole that was done; but we cannot see the entire design of it, or even perceive its leading object, without looking further, and connecting it with the higher purposes of God respecting His kingdom among men. What He sought in Canaan was an inheritance,—a place of rest and blessing for His people, but still only a temporary inheritance, and as such a type and pledge of that final rest which remains for the people of God. All, therefore, had to be arranged concerning the one, so as fitly to represent and image the higher and more important things which belong to the other; that the past and the temporary might serve as a mirror in which to foreshadow the future and abiding; and that the principles of God's dealing toward His Church might be seen to be essentially the same, whether displayed on the theatre of present or of eternal realities. Since the place chosen for the inheritance of Israel had become in a peculiar sense the region of pollution, this region required to be sanctified by an act of divine judgment upon its corrupt possessors, and thereby fitted for becoming the home and heritage of saints. In this way alone could the things done concerning it shadow forth and prepare for the final possession of a glorified world,—an inheritance which also needs to be redeemed from the powers of darkness that meanwhile overspread it with their corruptions, and which must be sanctified by terrible acts of judgment upon their ungodliness, before it can become the meet abode of saints in glory. The spirit of antichrist must be judged and cast out; woes of judgment and executions of vengeance must precede the Church's occupation of her purchased inheritance, similar in kind to those which put Israel in possession of the land of Canaan. What, indeed, are the scenes presented to our view in the concluding chapters of Revelation, but an expansion to the affairs of a world, and the destinies of a coming eternity, of those which we find depicted in the wars of Joshua? In these awful scenes we behold, on the one hand, the Captain of Salvation, of whom Joshua was but an imperfect type, going forth to victory with the company of a redeemed and elect Church, supported by the Word of God, and the resistless artillery of heaven; while, on the other hand, we see the doomed enemies of God and the Church long borne with, but now at last delivered to judgment—

the wrath falling on them to the uttermost,— and, when the world has been finally relieved of their abominations, the new heavens and the new earth rising into view, where righteousness, pure and undefiled, is to have its perennial habitation. *Fairbairn.*

Section 209.

ACHAN'S SACRILEGIOUS THEFT. ISRAEL'S PUNISHMENT BY DEFEAT AT AI.
ACHAN'S DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT. TAKING AND DESTRUCTION OF AI.

JOSHUA 7 : 1-26 ; 8 : 1-29.

- 7 1 BUT the children of Israel committed a trespass in the devoted thing : for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the devoted thing : and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.
- 2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and spy out the land. And the men went up
- 3 and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up ; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai ; make not all the people to
- 4 toil thither ; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thou-
- 5 sand men : and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men : and they chased them *from* before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote
- 6 them at the going down : and the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the
- 7 evening, he and the elders of Israel ; and they put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish ? would that we had been content and dwelt
- 8 beyond Jordan ! Oh Lord, what shall I say, after that Israel hath turned their backs before
- 9 their enemies ! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall compass us round, and cut off our name from the earth : and what wilt thou do for thy
- 10 great name ? And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up ; wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face ? Israel hath sinned ; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them : yea, they have even taken of the devoted thing ; and have also stolen, and
- 12 dissembled also, and they have even put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies, they turn their backs before their enemies, because they are become accursed : I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted
- 13 thing from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow : for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, There is a devoted thing in the midst of thee, O Israel : thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the devoted thing
- 14 from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought near by your tribes : and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come near by families ; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come near by households ; and the household which the LORD
- 15 shall take shall come near man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the devoted thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath : because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.
- 16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel near by their tribes ; and the
- 17 tribe of Judah was taken : and he brought near the family of Judah ; and he took the family of the Zerahites : and he brought near the family of the Zerahites man by man ; and Zabdi
- 18 was taken : and he brought near his household man by man ; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto
- 19 Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and make confession unto him ; and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me. And Achan answered
- 20 Joshua, and said, Of a truth I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and thus and
- 21 thus have I done : when I saw among the spoil a goodly Babylonish mantle, and two hundred

shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them ; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.
 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent ; and, behold, it was hid in his tent,
 23 and the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel ; and they laid them down before the LORD.
 24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had : and they brought them up unto the valley of
 25 Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us ? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones ; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with
 26 stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones, unto this day ; and the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

8 1 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed : take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai : see, I have given into thy hand the king of
 2 Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land : and thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king : only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take
 3 for a prey unto yourselves : set thee an ambush for the city behind it. So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up to Ai : and Joshua chose out thirty thousand men, the mighty
 4 men of valor, and sent them forth by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city : go not very far from the city, but be ye
 5 all ready : and I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city : and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them ;
 6 and they will come out after us, till we have drawn them away from the city ; for they will
 7 say, They flee before us, as at the first ; so we will flee before them : and ye shall rise up from the ambush, and take possession of the city : for the LORD your God will deliver it into your
 8 hand. And it shall be, when ye have seized upon the city, that ye shall set the city on fire ;
 9 according to the word of the LORD shall ye do : see, I have commanded you. And Joshua sent them forth : and they went to the ambushment, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of Ai : but Joshua lodged that night among the people.

10 And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and mustered the people, and went up, he and
 11 the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. And all the people, *even the men of war* that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of
 12 Ai : now there was a valley between him and Ai. And he took about five thousand men, and
 13 set them in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city. So they set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait that were on
 14 the west of the city ; and Joshua went that night into the midst of the vale. And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at the time appointed, before the
 15 Arabah ; but he wist not that there was an ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.
 16 And all the people that were in the city were called together to pursue after them : and they
 17 pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel : and they left the city open, and pursued after
 18 Israel. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the javelin that is in thy hand toward Ai ; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his
 19 hand toward the city. And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and entered into the city, and took it, and they hasted and
 20 set the city on fire. And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that
 21 way : and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city
 22 ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. And the other came forth out of the city against them ; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that
 23 side : and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. And the king of
 24 Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they pursued

them, and they were all fallen by the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all
 25 Israel returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And all that fell that day,
 26 both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not
 back his hand, wherewith he stretched out the javelin, until he had utterly destroyed all the
 27 inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto them-
 28 selves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. So Joshua burnt
 29 Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation, unto this day. And the king of Ai he
 hanged on a tree until the eventide : and at the going down of the sun Joshua commanded,
 and they took his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city,
 and raised thereon a great heap of stones, unto this day.

Thus far Israel had not gained aught by military prowess. Miraculous intervention had secured the crossing of the Jordan and the capture of Jericho. But now the conquest by their own arm (under God) was to begin. They had been vividly taught by the events of the preceding month to be *trustful* before God, and this necessary lesson having been given, they were now to go forward and conquer the land for the Lord who sent them. But it very soon appeared that a new teaching of God's severity against *disobedience* was necessary. They were to learn that their trust in God against their enemies was to be proportioned to their own obedience to God. *Crosby.*

The story of this chapter begins with a *but*. Joshua did right, and observed his orders in everything. *But the children of Israel committed a trespass*, and so set God against them ; and then even Joshua's name and fame, his wisdom and courage, could do them no service. The sin is here said to be *taking of the accursed thing*, in disobedience to the command, and in defiance of the threatening (ch. 6 : 18). In the sacking of Jericho orders were given that they should neither spare any lives nor take any treasure to themselves ; we read not of the breach of the former prohibition (there were none to whom they showed any mercy), but of the latter. Compassion was put off and yielded to the law, but covetousness was indulged. Yet the history of Achan is a plain intimation that he of all the thousands of Israel was the only delinquent in this matter. Had there been more in like manner guilty, no doubt we should have heard of it ; and it is strange there were no more. H.

1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass. This is here attributed to the whole people, which was really the act of but one man or one family. Nevertheless, Israel was one people, and it is here dealt with as one corporate body. There was criminality in the midst of them. And it was necessary that it should be disavowed and punished, in order that the people might be freed from all complicity and connection with it. W. H. G.

—The crime of this one man is imputed to all Israel on the principle of the organic unity of the nation. As the body is diseased or wounded, though only in one of its members, so his trespass destroyed the moral integrity of the whole people. *Wai'e.*

Trespass in the devoted thing. The words signify " the thing that was consecrated to God," as was all the silver and gold (ch. 6 : 19). When God relates to Joshua the sin of Israel as the reason of their flying before their enemies, he represents Achan's crime as sacrilege combined with theft and dissembling. *Jos. Mede.*—It was SACRILEGE, it was invading God's rights, alienating his property, and converting to a private use that which was devoted to his glory, and appropriated to the service of his sanctuary—this was the crime to be thus severely punished, for warning to all people in all ages to take heed how they rob God. H.

Achan, the son of Carmi. This Achan is elsewhere called *Achar, trouble or the troubler*, undoubtedly in allusion to the effect of his conduct on this occasion. Nothing is more common in the Scriptures than for the names of persons and places to be changed in consequence of, and in allusion to, certain remarkable events by which they may have been distinguished. *Bush.*

2. Ai—east of Bethel. From the neighborhood of Jericho three roads or passes strike up toward the interior of Palestine ; one leads to the southern district, by the way of Jerusalem ; another, which leads to the central, ascends by Geba and Michmash ; and another, and more northerly, by Ai and Bethel. Joshua deemed it best, in the first instance, to take possession of the central district ; and for this purpose it was essential that he should hold the road by Ai. W. G. B.—The site of Ai has been identified by Dr. Robinson, twelve miles northwest from Jericho ; ten miles northeast from Jerusalem ; three miles southeast from Bethel. The valley of Achor was a short distance south of ancient Jericho. *Coleman.*

Nine miles south of Shiloh is the modern vil-

lage of Beitin, the site of Bethel. Here there is nothing but a heap of ruins, but on the hill adjoining and east of Bethel are the remains of a fortified Christian church, which was probably built by the early Christians to consecrate the spot where Abraham built his second altar after entering the Promised Land, and where he separated from Lot. The site of Ai may be confidently assigned to a ruined hill-top east of the church, called by the Arabs Et Tell, "the heap." This corresponds exactly to the description, when we know the site of Bethel and the site of Abraham's encampment where he built an altar; for we read that he pitched his camp having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east. There is a valley behind the ruined heap where Joshua placed his ambush. There is a spot opposite, across the intervening valley, where Joshua stood to give the preconcerted signal; and there is a plain or ridge down which the men of Ai hurried in pursuit of the retreating Israelites, so that the men in ambush rose and captured the city. *Tent Work.*

Ai was a comparatively smaller city than Jericho, numbering only 12,000 inhabitants (ch. 8 : 25). Yet its position was exceedingly important. Southward it opened the road to Jerusalem, which is only a few hours distant; northward it commanded access to the heart of the country, so that as we find in the sequel a victorious army could march thence unopposed into the fertile district of Samaria. Moreover, the fate of Ai virtually decided also that of Bethel. A. E.

4, 5. There was no serious fighting, or the slaughter would have been more than thirty-six. "There went up, . . . and"—what then? Fought? No. "They fled before the men of Ai," rushing in wild terror down the steep pass which they had so confidently breasted in the morning, till the pursuers caught them up at some "quarries," where, perhaps, the ground was difficult, and there slew the few who fell, while the remainder got away by swiftness of foot, and brought back their terror and their shame to the camp. A. M.—In this second battle the Israelites are beaten: it was not the fewness of the assailants that overthrew them, but the sin that lay lurking at home. The wedge of Achan did more fight against them than all the swords of the Canaanites. The victories of God go not by strength but by innocence.

6-9. But good Joshua, that succeeded Moses no less in the care of God's glory than in his government, is much dejected with this event. He rends his clothes, falls on his face, casts dust upon his head, and as if he had learned of his

master how to expostulate with God, says, "What wilt thou do to thy mighty name?" Bp. H.

—This he looks upon and laments as the great aggravation of the calamity, he feared it would reflect on God, his wisdom and power, his goodness and faithfulness; what would the Egyptians say? Nothing is more grievous to a gracious soul than dishonor done to God's name. H.—He viewed the hand of God rather than of man in this disaster; and this led to his deep humiliation before God. But his tender regard for the honor of the divine name was that which eminently distinguished him on this occasion. This was the plea which Moses had often used, and to which God had paid especial regard; and the man that feels it in his soul and urges it in sincerity and truth can never be ultimately foiled. *Bush.*

It had been Israel's first defeat. The immediate danger likely to accrue was a combination of all their enemies round about, and the utter destruction of a host which had become dispirited. But there was even a more serious aspect than this. Had God's pledged promises now failed? or, if this could not even for a moment be entertained, had the Lord given up His gracious purpose, His covenant with Israel, and the manifestation of His "Name" among all nations, connected therewith? Feelings like these found expression in Joshua's appeal to God, when, with rent clothes and ashes upon their heads, he and the elders of Israel lay the livelong day, in humiliation and prayer, before the Lord, while in the camp "the hearts of the people" had "melted and became as water." We require to keep in view this contrast between the terror of the people and the praying attitude of their leaders, to realize the circumstances of the case; the perplexity, the anxiety, and the difficulties of Joshua, before we judge of the language which he used. It fell indeed far short of the calm confidence of a Moses; yet, in its inquiry into the reason of God's dealings, which were acknowledged, faith wrestled with doubt, while rising fear was confronted by trust in God's promises (verse 9). Best of all, the inward contest found expression in prayer. It was therefore, after all, a contest of faith, and faith is "the victory over the world." A. E.

10. All his expostulations are answered in one word; "Get thee up, Israel hath sinned." Joshua now knows that Israel, which before prevailed for their faith, is beaten for their sin. Bp. H.—11. The cause of the disaster is with Israel, not with God, and therefore the remedy is not in prayer, but in active steps to cast out the unclean thing. The prayer had asked two

things,—the disclosure of the cause of God's having left them, and his return. The answer lays bare the cause, and therein shows the conditions of his return. Note the indignant accumulation of verbs in verse 11, describing the sin in all its aspects. The first three of the six point out its heinousness in reference to God, as sin, as a breach of covenant, and as an appropriation of what was especially his. The second three describe it in terms of ordinary morality, as theft, lying, and concealment; so many black sides has one sin when God's eye scrutinizes it. Note, too, the attribution of the sin to the whole people, the emphatic reduplication of the shameful picture of their defeat, the singular transference to them of the properties of the devoted thing which Achan has taken, and the plain, stringent conditions of God's return. Joshua's prayer is answered. He knows now why little Ai has beaten them back. He asked, "What shall I say?" He has got something of grave import to say. A. M.

The rebuke of the Lord meant that this was not a time for prayer, but for self-examination, on the part of Israel; not for complaint, but for repentance. It was not that God had forsaken Israel, as Joshua seemed to imagine, but that Israel had forsaken God. It was this that needed inquiry. And is the lesson thus conveyed not also that which comes home alike to the church and to individual Christians in days of sorrow and defeat? "Get thee up . . . Israel hath sinned." That alone is success which cometh from his presence and blessing. And that is not real or, at least, lasting defeat, which brings us to our knees, and leads to self-examination and the cleansing from all sin. A. E.

A principal reason why they were forbidden to appropriate any spoil of this wealthy city was to impress upon them the fact that the conquest of the city was not in any respect due to the power of their arms, and that, therefore, they had no right to any portion of the spoil. Nothing was so well calculated as this privation to remind them to whom alone this important conquest was due. It was also a prudential measure, as it tried the obedience of the people. Kit.

13. On the morrow would be the search for the offenders. That very evening they would make their solemn ritual preparation for the investigation. The fearful nature of sin is shown most forcibly in this memorable scene. Crosby.

14. Though God revealed *the fact*, he did not name *the person* that had committed it, but left that to be discovered in a way more impressive

to the nation, and more merciful to the offender, inasmuch as it gave him time for repentance and voluntary acknowledgment. Bush.

15. The burning with fire was the most striking token of the consuming wrath of a holy God. (See Heb. 12 : 29, and 10 : 27.) Crosby.—*All that he hath.* That one guilty of sin does involve in its consequences those connected with him, is simply a *fact*, admitting no discussion, and is equally witnessed when God's law in nature and when His moral law are set at defiance. The deepest reason of it lies in this, that the God of nature and of grace is also the founder of society; for the family and society are not of man's devising but of God's institution, and form part of His general plan. Accordingly, God deals with us not merely as individuals, but also as families and as nations. To question the rightness of this would be to question alike the administration, the fundamental principles, and the plan of God's universe. But there is reason for devout thankfulness that we can and do recognize the presence of God in both nature and in history. The highest instance of the application of this law is that which has rendered our salvation possible. For just as we had sinned and destroyed ourselves through our connection with the first Adam, so are we saved through the second Adam—the Lord from heaven, who has become our substitute, that in him we might receive the adoption of children. A. E.—Bishop Butler states a fact of daily experience when, in his irrefutable reply to objections against the mediation of Christ, he reminds us that nearly the whole of what we enjoy or suffer comes to us through our relation to other men. Every thinking man can see for himself that the conduct of parents shapes the destiny of their children. The more obvious operations of the law are visible to our feeble eyes. How much farther it extends is known only to God or as he reveals it to us. Boggs.

Had the Israelites turned this judicial mission into a war of conquest and plunder, they would have become corrupted in turn: hence all captured treasure was held to be sacred and no private looting was allowed. In stealing and secreting plunder Achan had violated an express prohibition, and endangered a necessary policy. The exigencies of military discipline and the sanctity and authority of the religious leadership of the people, required his exemplary though terrible punishment. Alas! in what calamities may one involve a family, a community, a nation, by his sins! and how sure it is that our sins will find us out! J. P. T.

Subdivisions of the Tribes (7 : 14, 16-18).

The tribes were divided into clans. The clans were divided into families or houses. The next in order were the individual men, with their wives and children. This fourfold division, exhibited in Josh. 7 manifestly existed in the Mosaic time and before. At the head of the tribes, and sections of the tribes, there were *princes* and heads, who represented the unity of the tribe, or of the section, and in that capacity had undoubtedly corresponding magisterial rights and duties. The common name for these chiefs of every grade was *heads of fathers' houses*. Those of them who stood at the head of a whole tribe were called *princes*. The *elders* are mentioned in connection with the heads of the tribes, and are much more frequently referred to than the latter. *Kurtz*.—The *principles* of the Mosaic law of *families* are the following :—Each family forms a self-contained whole, which as far as possible is to be preserved in its integrity. Each Israelite is a citizen of the theocracy only by being a member of a certain clan of the covenant people ; hence the value of genealogical trees. The representation of the family descends in the male line, and therefore marriages between the various tribes and families are of course allowed. On the contrary, if the male line has died out, the female line receives independent recognition for the preservation of the family, in order that no family in Israel may perish. The separation of family possessions is based on the separation of the families themselves. O.

16-18. To make the strongest possible impression upon all minds, both of the enormity of this sin, of the purity of their own holy Lord God, and of his all-searching eye before which no sin, however concealed from men, can be hidden, the whole people are brought up standing before him, and by the sacred lot, first, from all the tribes Judah is taken ; then onward by families, by households, and lastly man by man, until at length the guilty offender stood out before the assembled hosts of Israel—Achan, by name ; *the sinner* who had brought this great trouble upon Israel. H. C.

19. My son, give, I pray thee. What needed any other evidence, when God had accused Achan ? Yet Joshua will have the sin out of his mouth, in whose heart it was hatched, “ My son, I beseech thee, give glory to God.” Whom God had convinced as a malefactor, Joshua beseeches as a son. *Bp. H.*—**Give glory to God.** That is “ confess” is the only torture read of in the Old Testament, applied by a judge to a criminal. It was the most

sacred appeal which could be addressed to a wrong-doer's conscience. *Sime.*—How gentle are these words ! There is no harshness, no severity, but a true paternal pity for the man who has placed himself in so fearful and perilous a position. “ By this example,” observes Calvin, “ judges are taught that, while they punish crimes, they ought so to temper their severity as not to lay aside the feelings of humanity, and, on the other hand, that they ought to be merciful without being reckless and remiss ; that, in short, they ought to be as parents to those they condemn, without substituting undue mildness for the sternness of justice.” *T. Smith.*

In confessing sin, as we take shame to ourselves so we give glory to God, as a righteous God, owning him justly displeased with us, and as a good God, who will not improve our confessions as evidences against us, but is faithful and just to forgive when we are brought to own that he would be faithful and just if he should punish. By sin we have injured God in his honor, Christ by his death has made satisfaction for the injury ; but it is required that we by repentance show our good will to his honor, and as far as in us lies give glory to him. Bishop Patrick quotes the Samaritan Chronicle, making Joshua to say here to Achan, *Lift up thine eyes to the King of heaven and earth, and acknowledge that nothing can be hid from him who knoweth the greatest secrets.* H.

20, 21. Achan's confession, though late, yet was it free and full ; for he doth not only acknowledge the act, but the ground of his sin, “ I saw, and coveted, and took.” The eye betrayed the heart ; and that, the hand ; and now all conspire in the offence. Evil is uniform, and beginning at the senses, takes the inmost fort of the soul, and then arms our own outward forces against us. The over-prizing and over-desiring of these earthly things carries us into all mischief, and hides from us the sight of God's judgments. *Bp. H.*—“ I saw—I coveted—I took,” strikingly express the rise, progress, and consummation of crime. The inward corruption of the heart is first drawn forth by some enticing object. The desire of gratification is then formed, and the determination to attain it fixed. Then comes the act itself, followed by its bitter consequences. In this instance the temptation entered by the eye ; he *saw* those fine things as Eve saw the forbidden fruit ; and he allowed his eyes to gaze and feast upon the interdicted objects. The sight inflamed his desire ; and he *coveted* them. The next step was to carry out the feeling into act ; the desire

prompted him to *take* them, as he did and thus accomplished the fearful deed. So naturally does lust when it hath conceived bring forth sin, and sin when finished bringeth forth death.

Bush.—See what comes of suffering *the heart to walk after the eyes*, and what need we have to *make this covenant with our eyes*, that if they wander they shall be sure to weep for it. *Look not thou upon the wine that is red*, upon the woman that is fair; close the *eye* that thus offends thee, to prevent the necessity of *plucking it out and casting it from thee* (Matt. 5 : 28, 29). He owns, *I coveted them*. Had Achan looked upon these things with an eye of faith he would have seen them accursed things and would have dreaded them, but looking upon them with an eye of sense only he saw them goodly things and coveted them. **23.** When the stolen goods were brought, they were *laid out before the Lord*, that all Israel might see how plain the evidence was against Achan, and might adore the *strictness* of God's judgments in punishing so severely the stealing of such small things, and yet the *justice* of his judgments in maintaining his right to devoted things, and might be afraid of ever offending in the like kind. In laying them before the Lord, they acknowledged his title to them, and waited to receive his directions concerning them. Those that think to put a cheat upon God do but deceive themselves; what is taken from him he will recover (Hos. 2 : 9), and he will be a loser by no man at last. H.

24. While they learned from his mercies how greatly he was to be loved, they needed also to learn from his judgments how greatly he was to be feared. This lesson would be effectually taught them by the present act of severity, and the death of a single individual might, by its admonitory influence, be the means of afterward preventing the death of many thousands. *Bush.*—God's first revenges are so much the more fearful, because they must be exemplary. *Bp. H.*

25. Joshua passes sentence upon him, *Why hast thou troubled us?* He refers to what was said when the warning was given not to meddle with the accursed thing (ch. 6 : 18), *lest ye make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it*. *He that is greedy of gain*, as Achan was, *troubles his own house* (Prov. 15 : 27), and all the communities he belongs to. H.—That which is ill-gotten must be restored. Put it out of thy house, out of thy family; it will be a fire to burn, a moth to consume, a canker to fret all thy comforts. That which is ill-gotten will poison that which is well-gotten. *Caryl.*

All Israel stoned him. According to

the sentence of Jehovah, the whole congregation was to be regarded as participating in the crime of the individual, because every one was a living member of the whole. For this reason the punishment was committed to the whole congregation. By this punishment the congregation was to give back to the criminal its share of the guilt, and having led him out of the camp and put him to death, to wipe off the sin from Israel. That this was the light in which the punishment was viewed is especially apparent from the fact that the witnesses who heard the blasphemy, and therefore were more immediately concerned than the rest of the congregation, were required to lay their hands upon the head of the sinner, and thus by their own act and deed to cast off the guilt which they had involuntarily contracted, and transfer it to the head of the sinner. In this way the outward punishment became a moral act, performed by the whole congregation, and entered into such an inward relation to the crime that it could really be regarded as an extermination of the sin. *Baum.*

Most commentators read verses 24, 25, as implying that the sons and daughters of Achan were stoned with him, supposing that his family could not have been ignorant of their father's sin. Of the latter there is, however, no indication in the text. It will also be noticed that in verse 25 the *singular* number is used: "All Israel stoned him;" "and they raised over him a great heap of stones." In that case, the plural number which follows ("and burned them," etc.) would refer only to the oxen, asses and sheep, and to all that Achan possessed. A. E.

When indignation strikes at criminals, it strikes not for the advantage of society only, but as well for righteousness and for God. In such indignation there is no hatred. It is clear from malign breath as the steel sword of justice. It is at its core charitable, for it springs from the love of the good; and against the bad it bears no ill-will, but a most tender and pure pity. *Dykes.*—Many have ventured life and limb and many a better thing to gain the things of this world, and yet, after all, they have got nothing at all. Achan's golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him; and his garment a garment to shroud him. *Thomas Brooks.*

A new name was given to the place; it was called, the *Valley of Achor*, or *Trouble*. This was a perpetual brand of infamy upon Achan's name, and a perpetual warning to all people not to invade God's property. By this severity against Achan, the honor of Joshua's govern-

ment, now in the infancy of it, was maintained, and Israel, at their entrance upon the promised Canaan, were minded to observe, at their peril, the provisos and limitations of the grant by which they held it. The *Valley of Achor* is said to be given for a *door of hope*, because when we put away the accursed thing, then there begins to be hope in Israel (Hos. 2 : 15 ; Ezra 10 : 2). H.

There are striking points of analogy between this case of Achan at the opening of the Canaan dispensation, and the case of Ananias and Sapphira at the opening of the Christian age. Covetousness, the love of money, was the root-sin in each case. The demand for fearful judgment and vigorous retribution in the outset to head off a great temptation and to protect the people of God in scenes of fearful peril, constitute yet other points of obvious analogy. There are times and seasons when justice of the sternest type toward individual offenders is the only real mercy to the masses.

In regard to the case of Achan, it is within our limited vision to see that the Hebrew people were just entering upon a scene of great and searching temptation. The people and cities of Canaan were rich ; the Israelites were poor. Canaan had the resources of a somewhat high civilization ; gold, silver, vessels of brass and of iron ; goodly Babylonish garments—all dazzling before the eyes of a people forty years in a barren wilderness, and antecedently four hundred years afflicted in Egypt. With a free license to plunder, and appropriate all they could lay hands on, this movement for the conquest of Canaan would have become a marauding expedition, not a whit above the demoralizing wars of all barbarous tribes upon nations largely in advance of themselves in wealth and luxury. Could the God of Israel become a party to such a war of plunder ? Would such avarice, and theft, and selfishness have improved the morals and the piety of the children of Israel ? Would such license to his people have inured to the honor of Israel's God ? And yet further ; these fascinating spoils—these glittering prizes of gold and silver and these ornaments of the cultured Canaanites—were linked in on every hand with idolatry. Art and wealth, in Canaan as in every other heathen nation, lent their power to augment the attractions toward idol-worship. If God would shut this flood-gate of idolatrous influence sharply down, he could not have done less than he did in the case of Achan—make the first offender a fearful example of severe and terrible, but just and righteous, punishment.

But these considerations, though in point and of great force to show the aggravation of Achan's

sin, yet fall far short of the whole truth. The strongest points of the case appear in the special features as given in the history. God lent his miraculous power for the destruction of Jericho on the special stipulation ("covenant" he calls it in 7 : 11) that the city should be *devoted*—it and all therein to the Lord ; the sense of this, devotement being that whatever was appropriate should go into the treasury of the Lord, and all else be given up to absolute destruction. The Hebrew word (*cherem*), translated either "devoted" or "accursed," is used continually in this record (6 : 17, 18, and 7 : 1, 11). Moreover it was most explicitly stipulated that all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron were consecrated wholly unto the Lord (6 : 19) ; "they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." Joshua and the people so understood it, and acted accordingly, for the history is definite. "They burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein ; only the silver and the gold and the vessels of brass and of iron they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord" (6 : 24). Yet further ; the utmost pains were taken to have this matter well understood beforehand. The preliminary precautions ran—"And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it" (6 : 18). The sin of Achan had, therefore, these points of highest criminality : It was a "presumptuous sin," against known and most explicit prohibition, and in contemptuous defiance of God's authority. It was sacrilege—*stealing* from God ; taking property that was devoted to God by special stipulation. By all right-thinking men in every age, this sin has been accounted as of the highest enormity. To this it may be added that all the wealth of Jericho and the city itself fell into the hand of Israel by special miracle, wrought of God under these express stipulations. God being their Supreme King, the sin of Achan had the crowning element of being *high treason*. H. C.

THE TAKING OF AI (8 : 1-29).

1. Fear not. The Lord repeats the words which gave courage to Joshua at the beginning of his administration. He needed the comforting exhortation after the bitter experiences he had just passed through. Crosby.

2. Only the spoil thereof—shall ye take to yourselves. This was the grand point of difference in the prescribed manner of treating the two cities. In the one case, the spoil was granted to the people ; in the other

not. There was, therefore, no danger of their committing the same trespass here that they had there. *Bush.*—Observe how Achan, who caught at forbidden spoil, lost that, and life, and all, but the rest of the people, who had conscientiously refrained from the accursed thing were quickly recompensed for their obedience with the spoil of Ai. The way to have the comfort of what God allows, is, to forbear what he forbids us. No man shall lose by his self-denial. H.

12. Between Et Tell and Bethel there is a fine irregular plain, affording room for the military evolutions described in Josh. 8. Between this and Bethel, in the ravine of the Wady Harith, Joshua placed his ambush. H. B. T.—Toward the east the ground falls at first abruptly, and then passes off in a long, gentle slope to the edge of the steep descent to the Jordan valley, a feature which answers to the “Arabah” or plain (8 : 14) over which the men of Ai followed the feigned flight of the Israelites. On the west side of Et Tell, and entirely concealed from it by rising ground, is a small valley, well suited for an ambush, which falls into the deep ravine that protects the northern face of the old town ; into this latter valley the Israelites descended the night before the capture of Ai, and it was probably on the heights above, where the camp was pitched, that Joshua took his stand during the battle ; in this position he would be able to control the movements of the main body of the Israelites, and at the proper moment give the signal for the ambush to rise up quickly and seize the city. *Wilson*

17. Or Bethel. This city, situated at three miles distance from Ai, was confederate with it and aiding it with forces on the present occasion. **18. Stretch out the spear that is in thine hand.** That is, hold extended or stretched out, continue it in that position. This was probably agreed upon as the signal to be given by Joshua to the men in ambush, to notify them of the precise moment when to issue forth from their retreat and rush into the city. Conjoined with this there might have been another object in thus elevating the spear on this occasion ; viz. that it should serve like the lifting up of Moses’ hands in the battle with Amalek, as a token of the divine presence and assistance, a pledge of the secret efficacy of the almighty arm in securing them the victory. This seems highly probable from verse 26. *Bush.*

28. Between these two forces the men of Ai were literally crushed. Not one of them escaped from that bloody plain and slope. The slaughter extended to the district around. But of

what had been Ai “they made a *Tell* (or heap) forever.” Never was Scripture saying more literally fulfilled than this. For a long time did modern explorers in vain seek for the site of Ai, where they knew it must have stood. “The inhabitants of the neighboring villages,” writes Canon Williams, to whom the merit of the identification belongs, “declared repeatedly and emphatically that this was *Tell*, and nothing else. I was satisfied that it should be so when, on subsequent reference to the original text of Josh. 8 : 28, I found it written, that ‘Joshua burned Ai, and made it a *Tell* forever, even a desolation unto this day!’ There are many *Tells* in modern Palestine, each *Tell* with some other name attached to it to mark the former site. But the site of Ai has no other name ‘unto this day.’ It is simply *Et Tell—the heap*, ‘par excellence.’ ” A. E.—The modern name of the knoll on which Ai stood is a most remarkable incidental confirmation of sacred history. It is to be noted that the word *Tell* only occurs three or four times in the Hebrew Bible, while it is one of the most universal and familiar words in the Arabic, every place on a rising ground having this prefix, as *Tell Arad*, *Tell Hum*, *Tell Kadi*. But nowhere else do we ever find it standing alone. *Et Tell—the heap*, the one made and cursed by the leader of Israel. H. B. T.

Lessons of Achan’s Story.

God’s soldiers must be pure. The conditions of God’s help are the same to-day as when that panic-stricken crowd ignominiously fled down the rocky pass, foiled before an insignificant fortress, because sin clave to them, and God was gone from them. It is true to-day, and will always be true, that the victories of the church are won by its holiness far more than by any gifts or powers of mind, culture, wealth, eloquence, or the like. Its conquests are the conquests of an indwelling God, and he cannot share his temples with idols. When God is with us, Jericho is not too strong to be captured ; when he is driven from us by our own sin, Ai is not too weak to defeat us. If Christian effort seems ever fruitless, the first thing to do is to look for the Babylonish garment and the glittering shekels hidden in our tents. Nine times out of ten we shall find the cause in our own spiritual deficiencies. Our success depends on God’s presence, and God’s presence depends on our keeping his dwelling-place holy. When the church is “fair as the moon,” reflecting in silvery whiteness the ardors of the sun which gives her all her light, and without such spots as dim

the moon's brightness, she will be "terrible as an army with banners." This page of Old Testament history has a living application to the many efforts and few victories of the churches of to-day, which seem scarce able to hold their own amid the natural increase of population in so-called Christian lands, and are so often apparently repulsed when they go up to attack the outlying heathenism. "His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure," is true of the Christian soldier.

We learn the power of one man to infect a whole community, and to inflict disaster on it. The effects of the individual's sin are not confined to the doer. Achan was the sinner, all Israel suffered. We are knit together by a mystical but real bond, so that no man, be he good or bad, liveth to himself, and no man's sin terminates in himself. We see the working of that unity in families, communities, churches, nations. Men are not merely aggregated together like a pile of cannon-balls, but are knit together like the myriad lives in a coral rock. Put a drop of poison anywhere, and it runs by a thousand branching veins through the mass, and tints and taints it all. No man can tell how far the blight of his secret sins may reach, nor how wide the blessing of his modest goodness may extend. We should seek to cultivate the sense of being members of a great whole, and to ponder our individual responsibility for the moral and religious health of the church, the city, the nation. We are not without danger from an exaggerated individualism, and we need to realize more constantly and strongly that we are but threads in a great network, endowed with mysterious vitality and power of transmitting electric impulses, both of good and evil.

We have one more illustration in this story of the well-worn lesson,—never too threadbare to be repeated, until it is habitually realized,—that God's eye sees the hidden sins. Nobody saw Achan carry the spoil to his tent, or dig the hole to hide it. No doubt he held his place in his tribe as an honorable man, and his conscience traced no connection between that recently disturbed patch on the floor and the helter-skelter flight from Ai; but when the lot began to be cast he would have his own thought, and when the tribe of Judah was taken some creeping fear would begin to coil round his heart, which tightened its folds and hissed more loudly as each step in the lot brought discovery nearer home; and when at last his own name fell from the vase, how terribly the thought would glare in on him,—“And God knew it all the while, and I fancied I had covered it all up so safely.”

God's judgments may be long of being put on our tracks, but, once loose, they are sure of scent and cannot be baffled. It is an old, old thought, “Thou God seest me;” but kept well in mind, it would save from many a sin, and make a sunshine in many a shady place.

We have in Achan a lesson which the professing Christians of great commercial nations, like America and England, need sorely. Covetousness was the sin of Achan and Ananias and Sapphira. It is the sin of the church to day. The whole atmosphere in which some of us live is charged with the subtle poison of it. Men are estimated by their wealth. The great aim of life is to get money or to keep it, or to gain influence and observation by spending it. Did anybody ever hear of church discipline being exercised on men who committed Achan's sin? He was stoned to death, but we set our Achans in high places in the church. Perhaps if we went and fell on our faces before the ark, when we are beaten, we should be directed to some tent where a very “influential member” of Israel lived, and should find that to put an end to his ecclesiastical life had a wonderful effect in bringing back courage to the army, and leading to more unmingled dependence on God. Covetousness was stoned to death in Israel, and struck with sudden destruction in the apostolic church. It has been reserved for the modern church to tolerate and almost to canonize it; and we wonder how it comes that we are so often foiled before some little Ai, and so seldom see any walls falling by our assault. Let us listen to that stern sentence, “I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted thing from among you.” A. M.

There is so much in the *New Testament* respecting love, liberty, and the abolition of old ordinances, that we allow ourselves sometimes to be betrayed into supposing that the old dispensation was the dispensation of man's submission to God, and that the new dispensation is the dispensation of God's submission to man; that the Gospel is a kind of giving up on God's part, a sort of confession that He is not disposed to be particular about little things any more, and that it hardly avails Him to *attempt* to be particular about little things. Now, this conception of the Gospel as an economy of divine “relaxation,” divine “letting down,” divine “giving up,” is one that yields bitter fruit; it makes the Gospel contemptible by making it irresolute. And nowhere in the Scriptures do I find such evidence of God's determination that He will be obeyed, as I do on Calvary. C. H. P.

Section 210.

THE TRIBES AT EBAL AND GERIZIM. SOLEMN REHEARSAL AND INSCRIPTION OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

JOSHUA 8 : 30-35.

30 THEN Joshua built an altar unto the LORD, the God of Israel, in mount Ebal, as Moses the
 31 servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law
 of Moses, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lift up any iron : and they offered
 32 thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there
 upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote, in the presence of the children of
 33 Israel. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the
 ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the
 LORD, as well the stranger as the homeborn ; half of them in front of mount Gerizim, and half
 of them in front of mount Ebal ; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded, that they
 34 should bless the people of Israel first of all. And afterward he read all the words of the law,
 35 the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was
 not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the assembly of
 Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

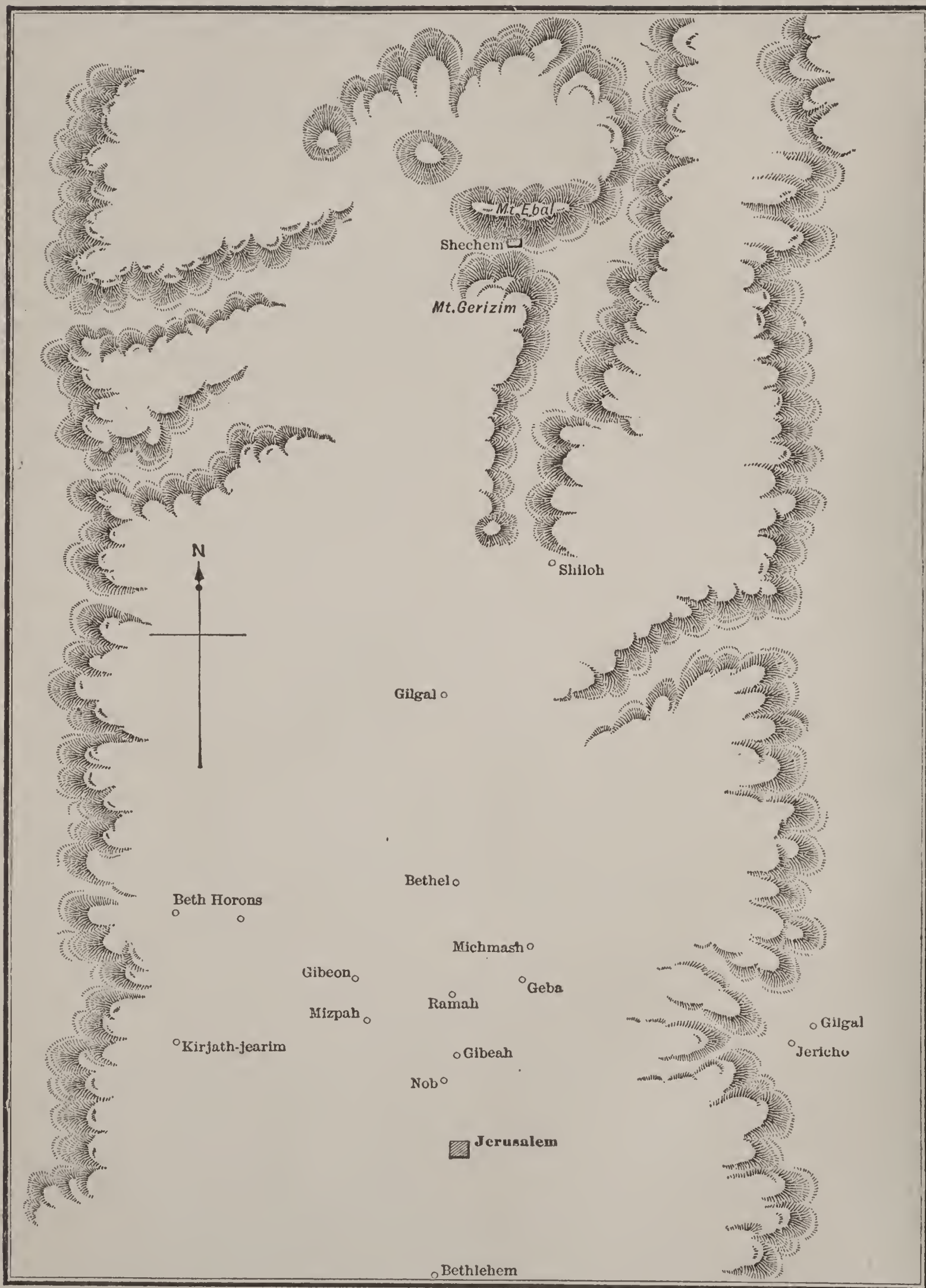
NOTE.—For a clearer apprehension of this signal incident read pages 678-682, Vol. II. ; also N. T., Vol. I., pages 96-100. B.

From Ai the victorious army marched northward to the Vale of Shechem, in the very heart of Palestine. Here the people, divided into two sections, were ranged along the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim, which face one another, at about a third of a mile apart, the whole length of the valley. Here, in the clear, resonant air, the whole law of Moses was read, and its blessings and curses were invoked, by these answering choirs, according as the people should obey or disobey its precepts. With the exception of the giving of the law at Sinai forty years before, which only a part of that assembly had witnessed, this was the most majestic spectacle in the history of Israel. All the tribes as one nation here entered into a solemn covenant of allegiance to the same constitution. In this vale, Abraham built the first altar to the true God that was erected in Canaan ; here Jacob purchased a field which contained a valuable well ; here the bones of Joseph were buried ; and here Jesus, sitting by Jacob's well, proclaimed the superiority of the truth to the place and time in which it was uttered, and the spirituality of worship, above all names and forms, all places and people. J. P. T. (See map, p. 86.)

A glance at the map will enable us to realize the route. From Ai and Bethel the direct route northward leads by Shiloh to Shechem (Ju. 21 : 19). Not a foe molested Israel on their

march right up the middle of the land, partly from the division of the land under so many petty chieftains, but chiefly because God had a favor unto them and to the work to which they had set their hands. The vale of Shechem is a pass which intersects the mountain-chain, that runs through Palestine from south to north. To the south it is bounded by the range of Gerizim, to the north by that of Ebal. A. E.—Mount Ebal is 3029 feet above the sea ; Gerizim, 2898. The contrast between Ebal and Gerizim is less real than is often supposed. The dip of the strata sinks to the north across the valley, and this causes a want of springs on the south side of Ebal, but its north side is almost as rich in them as the northern slope of Gerizim. *Pal. Fund Report.*

This spot, the site of the ancient Shechem, the City of Refuge, is unrivalled in Palestine for beauty and luxuriance. There are two mountains parallel to each other, almost meeting at their bases, but one mile and a half apart at their summits. They enclose a beautiful little valley between them, not more than one hundred yards wide at the narrowest part, and widening out in both directions. The town of Nablûs is situated at the narrowest part of the vale. The mountain on the north is Ebal, that on the south Gerizim, and the vale lies east and west. The summit of Mount Ebal is twelve hundred feet above the vale. The summit is rocky and bare, and there are no ruins on the mountain-top, except a curious square enclosure,



HIGH RIDGE OF CENTRAL PALESTINE. BETHLEHEM TO SHECHEM.

with very thick rude walls. Just below the summit there is a break in the regular slope of the hill, and a small but steep valley comes up from the vale below almost to the summit, forming a vast natural amphitheatre, in height equal to that of the mountain. Immediately opposite to this the steep slope of Mount Gerizim is similarly broken by a valley forming a second natural amphitheatre of equal beauty and grandeur. In these two lateral valleys were assembled the twelve tribes of Israel under Joshua, six tribes on Gerizim, and six on Ebal. The Levites and the ark were in the strip of the vale, and the blessings and cursings were read before the whole congregation. Nothing is wanting in the natural beauty of the site to add to the solemnity and impressiveness of such a scene. *Tent Work.*

There is a remarkable topographical feature, a recess on either side of the valley, forming a grand natural amphitheatre which was in all probability the scene of the ratification of the Law. In accordance with the command of Moses, the Israelites were, after their entrance into the Promised Land, to "put" the curse on Mount Ebal and the blessing on Mount Gerizim; this was to be accomplished by a ceremonial in which half the tribes stood on the one mount and half on the other; those on Gerizim responding to and affirming blessings, those on Ebal curses, as pronounced by the Levites, who remained with the ark in the centre of the interval. It is hardly too much to say of this natural amphitheatre that there is no other place in Palestine so suitable for the assembly of a large body of men within the limits to which the human voice could reach, and where at the same time each individual would be able to see what was going on. The recesses in the two mountains that form the amphitheatre are exactly opposite to each other, and the limestone strata running up to the very summits in a succession of ledges present the appearance of regular benches. A grander sight can scarcely be imagined than that which the reading of the Law must have presented: the ark borne by the Levites, on the gentle elevation that separates the waters that flow westward from those flowing toward the Jordan, and "all Israel and their elders, and officers, and their judges," on this side and on that, "half of them over against Mount Gerizim and half of them over against Mount Ebal," covering the bare hill-sides from head to foot. Few places afford such conveniences for the assembly of a large number of persons, or give, within the same area, so much standing ground; and the air of Palestine is so clear that

the voice can be heard at distances which would seem impossible in England, and it is not unusual for men passing along the valley to keep up a conversation with others on the heights. *Wilson.*

But we were able to test the matter by experiment, as other travellers had done before us. Stationing two of our number in the centre of the valley and in the middle of a field of corn, one of our brethren ascended some distance up the sides of Ebal, while we clambered up among the rocks of Gerizim; it having been agreed that the one should repeat a few of the curses, and the other a few of the blessings, without mentioning which of them he would select. And though a drizzling rain was falling, and the wind blowing so hard that we could scarcely keep our Bibles open, we were not only heard distinctly by the brethren in the valley, but by each other from the respective mountains; so that, as we remember, we were able to name the first of the curses that our friend had spoken from Ebal, as if he had intended a sly reference to some of those Rationalists whose assertions we were now reducing to experiment—"Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark." How many other of the historical objections of unbelief would shrivel into ashes were they similarly put to the proof! *A. Thompson.*

Our party determined to make the experiment for ourselves, only reversing the order—letting the people stand in the valley; and two of us, representing the priests who recited the blessings and the curses, ascended, one Mount Gerizim, the other Mount Ebal, and from the mountains on either side we recited, one the blessings, and the other the curses to the audience below. To our great surprise, not only did the response come up, "Amen!" from the audience midway between us, but we heard each other across from mountain to mountain just as distinctly as if speaking to each other from the pulpit to the vestibule of a large church, and that without speaking in a much louder voice than is needful in large churches. One thing is certain, that the spot selected by Moses, who had never been in the country, for the performance of this ritual by a congregation of two or three millions, has a most singular adaptation to such a purpose. And on the theory of rationalism, that Moses wrote only as a wise man, it must be difficult to account for his ability to select, without ever having seen the country, such a spot for such a service. *S. R.*

32. Wrote there upon the stones.

From De. 27: 2-7, it appears that in addition to the altar they were required also to erect stone



SHECHEM (NABLUS). EBAL (ON THE RIGHT) AND GERIZIM.

pillars, and that the writing was to be done upon the pillars, for which purpose they were previously to be plastered over. *Bush.*—In this hot climate, where there is no frost to dissolve the cement, it will continue hard and unbroken for thousands of years, which is certainly long enough. The cement on Solomon's pools remains in admirable preservation, though exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate, and with no protection. The cement in the tombs about Sidon is still perfect, and the writing on them entire, though acted upon by the moist, damp air always found in caverns, for perhaps two thousand years. What Joshua did, therefore, when he erected these great stones at Mount Ebal, was merely to write *in* the soft cement with a stile, or more likely *on* the polished surface when dry, with red paint, as in ancient tombs. If properly sheltered, and not broken away by violence, they would have remained to this day. But everything that could be destroyed has been long since, and again and again overthrown, in the countless convulsions of this most rebellious neighborhood. Nor need we mourn over the loss. The printing-press preserves this same law to us far more securely than could any monument of bronze or solid adamant. *W. M. Thompson.*—Here, if anywhere, it is a true saying, that against many assumptions of the recent criticism the very stones cry out. Nowhere in classical literature is there such an example of recklessness as that which relegates the whole history of the transaction at Gerizim and Ebal without more ado to the sphere of myths. The Egyptian monuments show that it was an ancient Egyptian custom first to plaster the stone walls of buildings, and also monumental stones that were to be painted with figures and hieroglyphics, with a plaster of lime and gypsum, into which the figures were then worked; thus it was possible in Egypt to engrave on the walls the most extended inscriptions. In this manner De. 27 : 4-8 must be understood, and in this manner it was accomplished by Joshua. O.

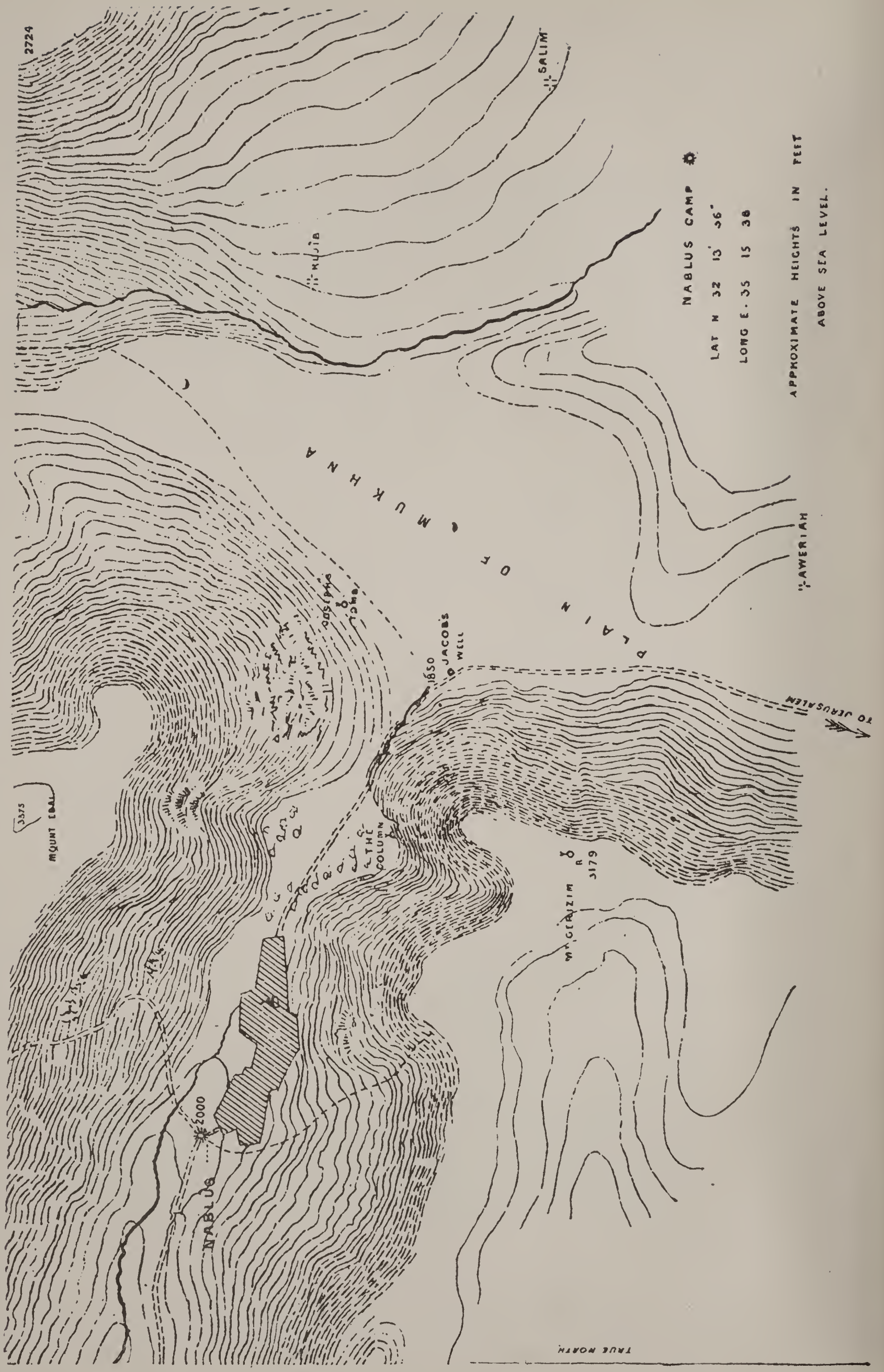
35. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded. Such was the solemn promulgation of the Mosaic Law at the very commencement of the settlement of the Jews in the land of their inheritance; and in every subsequent transaction of Joshua we find he acted according to the same law. "The book of the Law of God," or "of Moses," several times spoken of, is undoubtedly the same of which it is said that "when Moses had made an end of writing the words of the law in a book, until they were finished, he commanded the

Levites, saying, Take this book of the Law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be a witness against you" (De. 31 : 24); that book which he commanded to be "read before all Israel at the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release in the feast of tabernacles." This surely was the same with that which the Jews have received from the present hour back to the Babylonish captivity; which must have preceded that event, because it is also received by the hostile Samaritans who were planted in Judea at the commencement of the captivity; which must have preceded the division of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, because it was acknowledged in both; which must have preceded the establishment of the kings, because it supposes no such form of government but rather condemns it: in a word, that "book of the Law" which every writer and every sect among the Jews have quoted and acknowledged, in every possible form of quotation and acknowledgment, from the present period back to the immediate successor of Moses himself, who solemnly attests its authenticity and divine original. *Graves.*

The erection of the altar, the offering thereon burnt offerings and peace offerings, the publication of the law in writing, form altogether a solemn renewal of the covenant on the entrance of the people into the promised land, and recall the ceremonies observed on the original grant of the covenant at Sinai. And Ebal, the mount of cursing, was the fitting spot on which to celebrate them. For the curses were the penalties under which the children of Israel bound themselves to keep the law. Suitably also was the same place selected as that in which were to be set up both the monumental stones containing the law, and the altar at which the covenant was to be renewed. *Espin.*

Recurring to the transaction itself, we have a grand theme for the imagination to paint. Think of six hundred thousand adult men, besides women and children, marshalled in equal divisions on two opposing mountains; the ark surrounded by the priests and Levites in the intermediate valley; the solemn rehearsal of the blessings and cursings in tones loud and clear, in the hearing of the gathered thousands; and then the thundering "Amen," resounding from both mountain summits. What could have been more impressive! How must this scene have fixed the attention, especially of the young, and solemnly deepened the conviction, This law is *our* law: these blessings are to be *our* reward,

We reproduce the outline map of the English Survey, with its notes of heights, etc. B.



and these curses *our* doom, according as we obey or disobey this law of our own holy Lord God ! Whatever power of impression upon the human mind is possible through the senses—the eye, the ear, and the personal utterance of awe-inspiring words—is all present here in its intensest form. Truly here are scenes for every eye to see ; sounds for every ear to hear ; scope for the fullest utterance of every human voice. Here is everything to bring out a volume of common sympathy, rolling deep and strong, sustained throughout the entire transaction—the whole to be remembered through all future years as *the* great religious meeting of their lives. *Cowles.*

Never did human imagination conceive a scene so imposing, so solemn, so likely to impress the whole people with deep and enduring awe, as the final ratification of their polity as commanded by the dying lawgiver. In the territory, afterward assigned to the tribe of Ephraim, a central region, stand two remarkable mountains, separated by a deep and narrow ravine, in which the ancient Shechem stands. Here all Israel was assembled, six tribes on one height, six on the other. In the open day and in a theatre, as it were, created by the God of nature for the express purpose, after a sacrifice offered on an altar of stones, the people of Israel testified their free and deliberate acceptance of that constitution which their God had enacted. They accepted it with its inseparable conditions, maledictions the most awful, which they imprecated on their own heads in case they should apostatize from its statutes—blessings equally ample and

perpetual, if they should adhere to its holy and salutary provisions. On Mount Ebal—as the Levites read the heads of the prohibitory statutes, and denounced the curse against the idolater, the oppressor, the adulterer, the unnatural son, the incestuous, the murderer—the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, with one voice, which was echoed back from the opposite height, responded Amen, so be it. On Gerizim stood the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin ; as the blessings of the law were recited, to give the same unreserved assent. *Milman.*

View from Mount Gerizim. The prospect from Nebo surpasses it in extent, that from Gilead in grandeur of effect, but for distinctness and variety of detail Gerizim has no superior. Hermon rose before us in spotless purity far beyond and above Tabor, Gilboa, and the lesser hills of Galilee. On our right we could trace the trans-Jordanic range from the Sea of Galilee, Baasan, Ajlun, Gilead, down to Moab. On the left, the Mediterranean formed the horizon from Carmel perhaps to Gaza ; while Joppa and Cæsarea could be distinctly recognized. The southern view was more limited, being shut in by the hills of Benjamin. At our feet to the right was spread the long plain of Mokhna, into which the vale of Shechem debouches, where Jacob pastured his flocks, and where there was ample space for the tents of Israel when gathered thither by Joshua. All Central Palestine could be taken in at a glance, and the lesson of geography could not be easily forgotten. *Tristram.*

Section 211.

SUCCESSFUL CRAFT OF THE GIBEONITES.

JOSHUA 9 : 1-27.

- 9 1 AND it came to pass, when all the kings which were beyond Jordan, in the hill country, and in the lowland, and on all the shore of the great sea in front of Lebanon, the Hittite, and
2 the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof ; that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.
3 But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,
4 they also did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old
5 sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up ; and old shoes and
6 clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them ; and all the bread of their provision was
7 dry and was become mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said
8 unto him, and to the men of Israel, We are come from a far country : now therefore make ye
9 a covenant with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell
8 among us ; and how shall we make a covenant with you ? And they said unto Joshua, We are
9 thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye ? and from whence come ye ? And



MAP PREPARED FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THIS VOLUME.

they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the
 10 LORD thy God : for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that
 he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon,
 15 and to Og king of Bashan. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with
 16 them, to let them live : and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. And it came
 to pass at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard
 18 that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel
 smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD, the
 19 God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. But all the princes
 said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD, the God of Israel : now
 20 therefore we may not touch them. This we will do to them, and let them live ; lest wrath be
 21 upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. And the princes said, Let them live :
 27 so they became hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation. And Joshua
 made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the
 altar of the LORD, unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

NOTE.—Joshua had now returned from the Covenant-Service at Shechem to the camp at Gilgal, south of Shiloh. B.

1. The population was broadly distinguished into Canaanites, the inhabitants of the Canaan, or "lowlands," and Amorites, or "Highlanders." Canaan was originally the name of the coast on which the great trading cities of the Phœnicians stood ; but long before the time of the Israelitish invasion, the name had been extended to denote the dwellers in the plain, wherever they might be. Indeed, passages like Ju. 1 : 9 show that it had been extended even farther, and had come to signify tribes which were properly Amorites. Sayce.—The Canaanites, or "Lowlanders," properly so called, occupied the sea-coast as far south as Dor, a considerable portion of the plain of Esdraelon, and some spots in the valley of the Jordan. The Amorites, or mountaineers, occupied the central and southern hills with the Hittites and Hivites. Of these intruders, the Amorites seem to have been the most ancient and the most warlike, perhaps allied to the old gigantic race with which from time to time they appear in connection. The Hittites belong to the more peaceful occupants. The Hivites, like the Phœnicians of the north, inclined to a more regular form of political organization. Of the lesser subdivisions, the Jebusites are attached to the Amorites, the Perizzites to the Hittites, and the Girgashites to the Hivites. A. P. S.

3. A great league was now formed by all the kings west of Jordan, in the hills, the valleys, and the sea-coasts, as far north as Lebanon, against the Israelites. The people of Gibeon alone sought for peace by a curious stratagem. Gibeon (now *el-Jib*), "a royal city, greater than Ai," was the chief of the four cities of the Hivites, lying immediately opposite the pass of Ai, and at the head of the pass of Beth-horon. It

would therefore have been the next object of the attack of the Israelites. P. S.—Retaining its ancient name almost intact, the modern village of *el-Jib* stands on the top of a low, round, rocky hill, just at the place where the road to the sea parts into two branches, the one by the lower level of the *Wady Suleiman*, the other by the heights of the Beth-horons, to Gimzo, Lydda, and Joppa. Dic. B.

This Gibeon, only six or seven miles from Bethel, though represented by its crafty people as "a very far country," plays a conspicuous part in the coming history. Lying about six and a half miles north-northwest from Jerusalem, it covers the sides and summit of a sugar-loaf hill, which rises out of a saucer-like depression in the elevated plateau. The terraces surrounding the hill are like so many gigantic steps from bottom to top. The neighboring fields and groves indicate more fertility than is usually seen in this part of the country. N. C. B.

Gibeon is afraid to enter into the confederacy. It was the head city of a Hivite tetrapolis, to wit, Gibeon, Chephirah, Bēeroth, and Kiriath-jearim (verse 17), forming a republic or oligarchy in the midst of the monarchies of Palestine. On this account it was easier and more natural for Gibeon to act independently of the other principalities. Crosby.

The historical peculiarities of this transaction explain themselves. The situation and character of Gibeon at once placed it in an exceptional position. Planted at the head of the pass of Beth-horon and immediately opposite the opening of the pass of Ai, it would have been the next prey on which the Israelite host would have sprung. On the other hand, its organization, being apparently federal,—itself at the head of



N.W. VIEW OF *El-Jib* AND *Neby Samwîl*.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM.—(AYRE)

El-Jib (Gibeon) is conspicuous on the hill in front : *Neby Samwîl* (the traditional Ramah of Samuel or Ramathaim-zophim) is marked by the ruined mosque on the hill at the extreme right.

a small band of kindred cities,—separated it from the interests of the royal fortresses of the rest of Palestine. Their device is full of the quaint humor which marks its antiquity. It is observable that they represent themselves as not having yet heard of the aggression on Western Palestine, only of the by-gone conquest of the Amorite kings beyond the Jordan. *Stanley*.

6. The camp at Gilgal. This could not be the Gilgal down by Jordan, so far away from the centre to which Joshua had penetrated ; but the Gilgal of 2 K. 2 : 1, which was higher than Bethel (2 K. 2 : 2). It is this second Gilgal which, we think, became so famous in Samuel's day, and which became a centre of idolatry. (See 1 S. 7 : 16 ; 10 : 8 ; 11 : 14 ; 13 : 7, 8 ; 15 : 33.) It was the great headquarters of Israel, until the tabernacle was pitched at Shiloh, which was not far off. This second Gilgal bears still the old name (*Jiljilieh*), and is situated on a commanding height fifteen miles due north of Jerusalem, three miles west of the high northern road, and about seven miles north and west of Ai. It is also about fourteen miles south of Mount Gerizim. "It is near the western brow of the high mountain tract, and affords an ex-

tensive view over the great lower plain and the sea, while at the same time the mountains of Gilead are seen in the east." (*Robinson*.) It also has distant Hermon in sight. No more suitable spot could have been selected for Israel's central post during the process of the conquest. *Crosby*.

Gilgal, though regarded by the great body of commentators and geographers as the same place as that in which the Israelites first encamped (ch. 4 : 19), is a different place altogether. It was no other than the Gilgal we frequently meet with in Judges and the First Book of Samuel, situated on the mountains in the vicinity of Bethel. We dare not attribute to Joshua the folly of going back after he had penetrated to the very heart of the country, and again taking up his position on the extreme eastern border of the land, thus leaving the Canaanites at perfect liberty to move unfettered amid the very cities and places that he had already conquered. It is true that we are not told that he removed the camp to Gilgal after the capture of Ai. But we find no account of his proceeding from Ai to the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. In fact the book does not give a consecutive ac-

count of all the marches and tactics of Joshua, but merely a cursory description of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua. It was, no doubt, the favorable opportunities which Gilgal afforded to Joshua for the execution of his plans both in the North and South of the land, that induced him to select it as his headquarters. It was in the centre of the country, situated upon a steep hill with good table-land upon the top, and commanded a most extensive prospect of the large plain in the West, and also toward the North and East. *Keil.*

At Gilgal they seem to have formed a permanent camp. The mention of this place in De. 11 : 30, where it is described as "beside the oaks of Moreh," that is, near the spot of Abram's first altar (Gen. 12 : 7), implies a locality well known at the time, and, as we might almost conjecture from its after-history, a sort of traditional sanctuary. This alone would suffice to distinguish this Gilgal from the first encampment of Israel east of Jericho, which only obtained its name from the event which there occurred. It is impossible to suppose that Joshua marched back from Shechem to the banks of Jordan ; and again, that he did so a second time after the battles in Galilee to make apportionment of the land among the people by the banks of Jordan. Further, the locating of Gilgal near the banks of Jordan would be entirely incompatible with what we know of the after-history of that place. Gilgal was one of the three cities where Samuel judged the people ; here, also, he offered sacrifices, when the Ark was no longer in the tabernacle at Shiloh ; and there, as in a central sanctuary, did all Israel gather to renew their allegiance to Saul. Later on, Gilgal was the great scene of Elisha's ministry, and still later it became a centre of idolatrous worship (Hos. 4 : 15 ; 9 : 15 ; 12 : 11 ; Amos 4 : 4 ; 5 : 5). All these considerations lead to the conclusion, that the Gilgal which formed the site of Joshua's encampment is the modern *Jiljilieh*, a few miles from Shiloh, and about the same distance from Bethel—nearly equi-distant from Shechem and from Jerusalem.

In this camp at Gilgal a strange deputation had arrived (verses 3-6). Professedly and apparently the travellers had come a long distance. For their garments were worn, their sandals clouted, their provisions dry and mouldy, and the skins in which their wine had been were rent and "bound up" (like purses), as in the East wine-bottles of goat's skin are temporarily repaired on a long journey. According to their own account, they lived far beyond the boundaries of Palestine, where their fellow-townsmen had

heard what the Lord had done in Egypt, and again to Sihon and to Og, wisely omitting from the catalogue the miraculous passage of Jordan and the fall of Jericho, as of too recent date for their theory. Attracted by the name of Jehovah, Israel's God, who had done such wonders, they had been sent to make "a league" with Israel. It must have been felt that the story did not sound probable—at least, to any who had learned to realize the essential enmity of heathenism against the kingdom of God, and who understood that so great a change as the report of these men implied could not be brought about by "the hearing of the ear." Besides, what they proposed was not to make submission to, but a league with, Israel ; by which not merely life, but their land and liberty, would be secured to them. But against any league with the inhabitants of Canaan, Israel had been specially warned (Ex. 23 : 32 ; Nu. 33 : 55 ; De. 7 : 2). What if, after all, they were neighbors ? The suspicion seems to have crossed the minds of Joshua and of the elders, and even to have been expressed by them, only to be set aside by the protestations of the pretended ambassadors. It was certainly a mark of religious superficiality and self-confidence on the part of the elders of Israel to have consented on such grounds to "a league." The sacred text significantly puts it : "And the men (the elders of Israel) took of their victuals (according to the common Eastern fashion of eating bread and salt with a guest who is received as a friend), but they asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah." Their mistake soon became apparent. Three days later, and Israel found that the pretended foreigners were in reality neighbors ! A. E.

I commend their wisdom in seeking peace ; I do not commend their falsehood in the manner of seeking it. But as the faith of Rahab is so rewarded that her lie is not punished, so the fraud of these Gibeonites is not an equal match of their belief, since the name of the Lord God of Israel brought them to this suit of peace. *Ep. H.*

4. Wine-skins. Passing a bottle-making establishment, we were entertained by the sight of a lot of goat-skins in process of curing. All the apertures of the skins, neck and legs, having been closed, and the bodies filled with water, they stood in rows upon a platform—a headless, legless, swollen army of hairy goats. When thoroughly cured these skins become the leather bottles of Bible days and of the present day alike. In the Psalmist's expression : "I am become like a bottle in the smoke," it is to the leather bottle that he likens himself—dry, shriv-

elled and useless. Such were the "wine-bottles, old and rent," of the Gibeonites. *Dulles.*

14. God's Israel have often been deceived and imposed upon with a show of antiquity. But "*errors are never the older for being patched,*" and so seeming old; but they that will be caught with this Gibeonitish stratagem prove they have not consulted with God. **H.—Asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.** In this consisted the fault of the Israelites on this occasion, that they depended on their own judgment and did not consult the Divine oracle, which was at hand. It is no wonder that God should suffer them to be deluded by the Gibeonites when they had an infallible Director so near to them, and yet, in a matter of such moment as that of entering on a national treaty, never once thought of consulting him. *Slackhouse.*—It is by no means certain, if they *had* sought the divine direction, that they would have been commanded to reject the suit of the Gibeonites and show them no mercy. The probability is that upon *any* of the devoted nations voluntarily coming forward, professing repentance, renouncing idolatry, and embracing the true religion, the Israelites would have been authorized by God to spare their lives. But the circumstance is mentioned here as a severe reflection upon the princes of Israel for neglect of duty, for rashness, credulity, and impolicy. They rushed precipitately into an alliance which they had no right to form without the express sanction of Jehovah, and their "lips became a snare to their souls." *Bush.*

18-23. The main reason of the destruction of the Canaanites was their essential hostility to the kingdom of God. The danger to Israel, accruing from this, could be avoided in a solitary instance. With a view to this, the Gibeonites were indeed spared, but attached as "bondmen" to the sanctuary, where they and their descendants performed all menial services (Josh. 9 : 23). Nor, as the event proved, did they ever betray their trust, or lead Israel into idolatry. Still the rashness of Israel's princes, and the conduct of the Gibeonites, convey to the church at all times solemn warning against the devices and the deceit of the world, which, when outward advantage offers, seeks a friendly alliance with, or even reception into, the visible kingdom of God. *A. E.*

If any Israelite had but pulled down one stone from their walls, or shed one drop of Gibeonitish blood, he had no less plagued all Israel for perjury, than Achan had before plagued them for sacrilege. The sequel shows how God would have taken it: for when three hundred years after Saul slew some of these Gibeonites, all Israel smarted for the fact with a three years' famine, and that in David's reign who received this oracle from God, "It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." Neither could this wrong be expiated, but by the blood of Saul's seven sons, hanged up at the very court-gates of their father. Joshua and the princes had promised them life; they promised them not liberty: no covenant was past against their servitude. *Bp. H.*

Section 212.

BATTLE OF BETH-HORON, AND CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CANAAN.

JOSHUA 10 : 1-43.

10 1 Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, 2 and were among them; that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the 3 royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of 4 Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with 5 the children of Israel. Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped against Gibeon, and made 6 war against it. And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the

7 kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill country are gathered together against us. So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of 8 valor. (And the LORD [had] said unto Joshua, Fear them not : for I have delivered them into 9 thine hands ; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.) Joshua therefore came upon 10 them suddenly ; *for* he went up from Gilgal all the night. And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and he slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way 11 of the ascent of Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, while they were in the going down of Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died : they were more which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel ; and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ;

And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.

13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,

Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.

Is not this written in the book of Jashar ? And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and 14 hastened not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man ; for the LORD fought for Israel

15 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16 And these five kings fled, and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. And it was told 17 Joshua, saying, The five kings are found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah. And Joshua said, 18 Roll great stones unto the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them : but stay not 19 ye ; pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them ; suffer them not to enter 20 into their cities : for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, and the remnant which remained of them had entered into 21 the fenced cities, that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace : 22 none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. Then said Joshua, Open the 23 mouth of the cave, and bring forth those five kings unto me out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of 24 Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon. And it came to pass, when they brought forth those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the chiefs of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. 25 And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed ; be strong and of good courage : for 26 thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward Joshua smote them and put them to death, and hanged them on five trees : and they were hanging 27 upon the trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had hidden themselves, and laid great stones on the mouth of the cave, unto this very day.

Verses 28-39. Conquest and destruction of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir.

40 So Joshua smote all the land, the hill country, and the South, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings ; he left none remaining : but he utterly destroyed all that breathed, 41 as the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea 42 even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. 43 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

1. The name *Jerusalem* here occurs for the first time in the Scriptures. The original designation of the city seems to have been *Salem* (Gen. 14 : 18 ; Ps. 76 : 2), as it was called in the time of Melchizedek. *Bush*.

3. The places here named were probably the

most important cities of southern Canaan, and hence the king of Jerusalem, the nearest royal city to Joshua's host, sends to them for a union of forces. He was cut off from all the northern kings by Joshua's army. *Crosby*.

7. The noble disposition of Joshua, besides

his engagement, will not let him forsake his new vassals. Their confidence in him is argument enough to draw him into the field. The greatest obligation to a good mind is another's trust. How much less shall our true Joshua fail the confidence of our faith! We may be wanting in our trust; our trust can never want success. *Bp. II.*—But why needed Joshua to put himself and his men so much to the stretch? Had not God promised him that without fail he would *deliver the enemies into his hand*? It is true he had; but God's promises are intended, not to slacken and supersede, but to quicken and encourage our endeavors. He that believeth *doth not* make haste to anticipate providence, but *doth* make haste to attend it with a diligent, not a distrustful speed. *H.*

8. And the Lord said unto Joshua. More correctly "for the Lord had said;" as we cannot suppose that Joshua undertook this expedition *before* he had sought counsel of God, and received the encouragement contained in the ensuing words. Without some such encouragement as this, Joshua might have thought that this formidable host was sent against him and his new allies as a judgment upon him for negotiating an unlawful treaty. The verse properly falls into a parenthesis. *I have delivered them into thy hand.* The usual form of speech to express the absolute certainty of a future event. *Bush.*

9. All night. They could easily reach Gibeon (twelve miles from Gilgal) in one night. *Crosby.*—Joshua marches all night, and fights all day for the Gibeonites. If his very Israelites had been in danger, he could have done no more: God and his Joshua make no difference, betwixt Gibeonites Israelited and his own natural people. All are Israelites whom he hath taken to league. *Bp. II.*

Came upon them suddenly. When the moment came Joshua struck; and struck swift and hard. The plain old story in its civil style cared not to paint the picture for us, but contents itself with the simple word "suddenly." The five kings that thought to make but a short siege of Gibeon, waited only for the morn; but Joshua, with his men of war, "went up all night from Gilgal and fell upon them suddenly." Such slaughter was dealt that the very elements joined in as if in contagious sympathy, and hailstones hurled from the mountain-tops smote the routed foe; and such a day's work was done that the very sun and moon were fain to linger that they might see it through! Then too, again, we see him when all those kings from the north and south and east and west came and

pitched together against him by the waters of Merom, thinking now they would crush him with overpowering force; Joshua goes up suddenly against them, after his fashion, and armies and horses and chariots and cities roll down as before an avenging flame. *J. L. Chamberlain.*

10, 11. In the early morning, before the besiegers could have heard of his having left his camp by the Jordan, Joshua and his soldiers, strong in the assurance given by God that "not a man of them should stand before him," burst on the unsuspecting enemy and discomfit them utterly. The huge host—the largest Joshua had yet encountered—is driven before him up the rocky ascent to the mountain village of Beth-horon the Upper. In headlong flight they rush down the slippery rocks of the precipitous descent that leads to the lower village of the same name—Beth-horon the Nether. There a fierce tempest, partial as the sudden storms of mountain regions usually are, for the pursuers were unharmed by it, accompanied with hailstones of prodigious size, bursts on the fugitives, and completes their discomfiture. As afterward against Sisera, "the stars in their courses fought against them," and, stricken down by the hand of God, "they were more which died with hailstones than were slain by the sword. *E. V.*

Between the two Beth-horons is a steep pass, still very rocky and rough, though the rock has been cut away in many places, and the path formed into steps. The main road from Jerusalem and the Jordan valley to the sea-coast lay through the pass of Beth-horon, and accordingly both the Beth-horons were secured by Solomon with strong fortifications (2 Chron. 8:5). It was in this pass that Judas Maccabæus fell suddenly on the Syrians and routed them. Here, too, the Roman army, under Cestius Gallus, after being driven from its position before Gibeon by an impetuous attack of the Jews from Jerusalem, sustained severe losses in men and baggage from the insurgents. *Espin.*

The pass of Beth-horon was the western access, as that of Jericho was the eastern, to the hill country and the fastnesses of Central Palestine. At the head of the pass stood the cities of Mizpeh and Gibeon. From the slaughter by Joshua, near Gibeon, the Canaanites fled "along the way that *goeth up* to Beth-horon." From thence they crossed the ridge and descended toward the west. "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the *going down* of Beth-horon, that the Lord cast great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah" (verses 12, 14). Down the same pass, too, David drove the Philistines (2 S. 5:25). It

was the scene of the last success of the insurgent Jews over the Romans just before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Up the same pass the Crusading armies advanced under Richard Cœur-de-Lion. *Beth-horon the Upper* and *Beth-horon the Nether* have survived all the vicissitudes of four thousand years, and the same names still remain in Beit'ur el-foka and Beit'ur et-tahta: the upper village perched on the crest and steep side of the hill, the lower (et-tahta) on a low hill, farther down on the other side of the pass; and the road from Gibeon and Michmash to the Philistine Plain still passes by them.

12. Standing on the summit of the pass, with Gibeon behind him, Joshua looked down the broad green vale of Ajalon, as it unfolded in the distance into the open Plain of Sharon and the wide expanse of the Mediterranean beyond. The sun "was in the midst of heaven," for it was noon-day, the moon was visible above the hailstorm which came driving up from the west, when Joshua spake, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." H. B. T.—The Amorites were evidently making for their cities, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, far away on the plain to the south; and though a great part of the day still remained, yet night might come on ere the Israelites could overtake them, and thus favor their escape—hence Joshua's remarkable prayer and command. J. L. P.

While the vanquished Amorites were rushing in wild confusion down the mountain pass, eager to reach their strongholds or to find refuge in the rocky fastnesses with which the district abounds, Joshua, gazing down on them from the summit of the pass, and apprehensive lest the day should prove too short for the accomplishment of his work, uttered that bold apostrophe, that magnificent venture of faith, in which the servant of the true God called on the heavenly bodies, as His ministers, to stand still and aid the overthrow of their idolatrous worshippers. E. V.

12-15. Joshua's impassioned prayer of faith is quoted in the sacred text from the "Book of Jasher," apparently, as we infer from 2 S. 1:18, a collection of poetical pieces, connected with the sublimest scenes in the history of the heroes of the kingdom of God. In this instance the quotation begins, as we take it, at verse 12, and ends with verse 15. This is proved by the insertion in verse 15 of a notice, which in the historical narrative occurs only in verse 43. For it is evident that Joshua did *not* return to Gilgal immediately after the battle of Gibeon (verse 21),

but pursued the war, as described in the rest of ch. 10, till the whole south of Palestine was reduced. Thus verses 12-15 are a quotation from "the Book of the Pious," inserted within the Book of Joshua, the narrative of which is resumed in verse 16. A. E.

The geographical localities named concur with the facts stated to show that it was during the morning hours of the day, and not toward the evening hours, that the sun and moon were arrested in their course by this miracle. The direction of this flight and pursuit was *westward*. Joshua had passed the highlands on which Gibeon stood, so that Gibeon lay eastward from his point; while the valley of Ajalon was still some distance in the west. The sun had risen above Gibeon, perhaps nearly half way to his meridian, so that it stood still "in the *midst of heaven*, i.e. coming near the middle of its diurnal circuit in the heavens; while the moon, somewhat past the full, hung over the valley of Ajalon." H. C.—It is well known now, that the sun and moon are so closely associated that the staying of the one implies the staying of the other; but not till after long ages was their connection revealed by astronomy. While in other books called "sacred," the strangest mistakes are made as to the sun and the moon, their exact relation is in this early narrative distinctly acknowledged. The sun, it is true, is related to other planets in our system; but in this incident the earth is the standpoint, and therefore appropriately are the moon and the earth conjoined. The sun visibly arrested in the heavens, was all that was essential for the leader of the Israelites; yet the collateral fact is announced—the moon staying in the valley of Ajalon. *Fraser*.

It should be remembered that, as in those early ages men had not the slightest notion of the modern discoveries in astronomy, it was unavoidably necessary that the event should be described according to the knowledge which then obtained. When God directed Joshua to record this miracle, he did not direct him to record it in a manner more agreeable to true astronomy; because if he had done so, unless he inspired the world at the same time with a true knowledge of astronomy, the account would rather have tended to raise among those who read it and heard of it, disputes and "oppositions of science falsely so called," than have promoted the great ends of religion intended by it. *Shuckford*.—It had been unreasonable at that time to think of astronomy, or of the errors of sight; for if any one had told him that the sun could not really move in the valley of Ajalon, but only

in relation to sense, would not Joshua have answered that his one desire was that the day might be prolonged, so it were by any means whatever? *Kepler.*

Observers of the scene of the battle are struck with the admirable precision of the Scripture narrative in its topographical details. The language marks the *first stage* of the flight of the Amorites—from before Gibeon toward Beth-horon—as *upward*. This, doubtless, was the stage between Gibeon and the summit-ridge, a mile or two westward of the town. Having passed this ridge their way would be downward, and from Beth-horon when they reached it would be rapidly downward, over frightful steeps past lower Beth-horon till the plain below was reached. This *second stage* of the flight is also clearly marked in the narrative. The language is: “And it came to pass, as they fled and were in the *going down* to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. In this second stage of the flight, the Amorites distanced their pursuers, already wearied with the previous long march and hot fighting. Yet this, through a special providence, resulted in the Israelites’ advantage. For the clouds of a sudden storm were now seen darkening the plain below, and rolling inward from the sea toward the mountains. The fugitives rushed into the bosom of this storm, with its descending and destructive hail, while the tardy Israelites avoided it. The victory of God’s people, had it ended just here, would have been what we call a *brilliant* one. But how many brilliant victories are indecisive of the cause for which war is waged! Must not Joshua have agonized in spirit as he beheld the quickening pace of the fugitive Amorites and the slackening pace of his own troops, lest the decisive results of victory were about to elude his grasp? How many a victorious general has longed for only an hour or two more of daylight, that he might reap the fruits of victory! How many a beaten general has longed for the coming of night, to save him from utter rout and destruction! On the afternoon of Waterloo, the Prussian forces not having yet come upon the ground, and the lines of the British having become thin and wavering from the repeated and fiery onsets of the French, Wellington, wiping the bead-drops of agony from his brow, sighed for “Night—night, or Blücher!” Nay, two years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus—as we read in Josephus—the Roman army, under Cestius Gallus, having been repulsed from the sacred city by the Jews, and fleeing with frightful loss

past Gibeon down this identical pass of Beth-horon, was saved from complete destruction only by the coming of night. How wholly natural, then, for Joshua intensely to desire that the coming of night should be deferred, giving time for his army to overtake and make an end of their adversaries! How every way urgent was the occasion for that sublime prayer—nay, for that awful command of Joshua, uttered as in God’s name—that the sun should pause in the heavens until the victory of God’s people should be completed! N. C. B.

The sun, moon, and lights of heaven were the deities at that time worshipped by the inhabitants of Canaan; but the Israelites were the servants of the true God, by whose command and under whose protection they were to war against these nations and their gods; and what greater demonstration could be given of the power of their God to support them, and of the inability of the false deities of the Canaanites to assist their worshippers, than to see that the God of Israel could cause these to contribute to, instead of preventing the ruin that was coming on those who served them. We cannot imagine that Joshua should, without a special intimation from heaven, have addressed to God the prayer concerning the sun and moon; for of how great extravagance would he have been proved guilty, if no effect had followed from his prayer? Unquestionably the same Lord who spake unto him before the battle, who bade him not fear the armies of the Canaanites, who assured him that they should not be able to stand before him, directed him to ask for this wonderful miracle; and in granting what he had asked for gave a full testimony, both to the Israelites and their enemies, that the gods of the heathen were but idols; and that it is the Lord that made and that ruleth in the heaven. *Shuckford.*

It was not Joshua but his faith that did this; not by way of precept, but of prayer; if I may not say, that the request of a faithful man commands. God’s glory was that which Joshua aimed at: he knew that all the world must needs be witnesses of that, which the eye of the world stood still to see. What is there that God cannot do? And what is there which God can do, that faith cannot do? *Bp. H.*

13. On the expression in our English Bible, “And hastened not to go down about a whole day,” Professor Bush, who forty years ago was considered the finest Hebrew scholar in America, writes: “This should be ‘hasted not to go down as at the perfect day’—i.e., as it naturally does when the day is finished, when the ordi-

nary space of a day has elapsed. This we conceive to be the true force of the original. One who is acquainted with the Hebrew, upon turning to the original of Ex. 31 : 18 ; De. 16 : 6 ; 24 : 13 ; Ps. 73 : 19, will find ample proof of the correctness of this interpretation. The meaning, as we understand it, is not that the day was miraculously lengthened out to the extent of twelve hours, or another whole day, but simply that when the ordinary duration of a day was completed, the sun still delayed his setting, but for how long a time we are not informed ; long enough, we may presume, for fully accomplishing the object for which the miracle was granted." Thus much toward a correct rendering of the Bible record. Let us next translate this record into the language of science. Within the present century scientists have learned that the revolution of the earth upon its axis is not the only means by which a body like the sun may be, in appearance, raised above the horizon. What is termed mirage, caused by the coming in of a dense stratum of air at some distance above the earth's surface, will produce this same effect. "The particular form of mirage known as *looming* consists in an excessive apparent elevation of the object. A most remarkable case of this sort occurred on the 26th of July, 1798, at Hastings. From this place the French coast is fifty miles distant ; yet from the seaside the whole coast of France from Calais to near Dieppe was distinctly visible, and continued so for three hours." (*Chambers's Ency.*) In the summer of 1856 the writer witnessed a mirage on Lake Michigan, by which the Manitou Islands, some twenty miles distant from his point of observation, were raised, in appearance, thirty degrees or two hours above the horizon. Knowing these facts, were I to attempt to translate the record of Joshua's miracle into the language of science, I would not write, So the earth stopped in its revolution upon its axis, but so the Lord caused a mirage by which the sun and moon were made to remain for a season, in appearance, above the horizon ; and thus lengthened out the day, for the Lord fought for Israel. This interpretation does not in any way affect the truly miraculous character of the event recorded ; but it does explain a particular recorded, otherwise inexplicable—viz. : that the moon as well as the sun remained above the horizon ; and it effectually answers the cavils (1) that this remarkable day is not mentioned by the Chaldean or Egyptian astronomers, inasmuch as a lengthening of the day produced in this way would not extend many miles from its centre at Gibeon ; and (2)

the stupendous character of the event disappears, and the miracle takes its place naturally in the class of miracles recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. *Armstrong.*

It answers all the conditions of the question—while it remains a most stupendous exhibition of the power of the Almighty in that day when "he hearkened to the voice of a man," to suppose that the *light* was supernaturally prolonged, through the operation of the same laws of refraction and reflection, by which the sun's disc is ordinarily seen above the horizon some time after he has really sunk below it. He who created the heavenly luminaries, and established the laws which transmit their light, could at this time so have altered the medium through which the sun's rays passed as to render it visible above the horizon long after it would, under ordinary circumstances, have disappeared. This, to the apprehension of the Israelites, would have had all the visible effects of staying the career of the sun ; and to ours, that of arresting the earth's revolution on its axis ; and this is all that the sacred text requires—all that Joshua required—all that we need require.

The Israelites acted upon the distinct commission which they received, and which was attested by the miracles which attended their career. The passage through the Red Sea and through the Jordan—the miraculous overthrow of the walls of Jericho—the hailstones at Gibeon, which, without touching the Israelites, slew more of their enemies than the sword—and the remarkable phenomenon in the heavens, likened to the standing still of the sun and the moon—were all so many proofs of their commission, and of the authority by which they acted. That authority and commission was attested by the belief of the very enemies against whom they warred, and who were very far from thinking that they had mistaken a fancy of their own for a Divine commission. They found it all too real. *Kit.*

To the friends of the Bible the appearance of miracles in this portion of the history should be particularly welcome. For it is only on the understanding that the Israelites, in conquering the land of Canaan and exterminating its people, were the instruments of divine vengeance, and were but acting clearly on a divine commission—just as the magistrate acts who inflicts capital punishment for high crime—that we can justify the extreme severity of their procedure. But thus acting, we can see how their procedure was justifiable. Thus the miracles attending this portion of the history are evidences to us, as they were to the Israelites themselves, of

their divine commission. And was there not a *moral* reason existing of sufficient importance for the grandest and farthest-reaching miracle on that day when Joshua bade the sun and moon pause in their flight? The Israelites, insignificant in themselves, were the people chosen of God for the accomplishment of His great purpose of human redemption. They had now come to occupy the land covenanted to them of God hundreds of years before, in which they should receive and preserve the oracles of God, in which they should maintain God's prescribed worship until Shiloh should come—until the Son of God should be born among them, the world's Redeemer. And now the hour critical in all these high relations had struck. On the full success of that blow under which the enemies of God and of His church were reeling from before Gibeon, God's honor and man's salvation were in a high sense suspended, and it seemed only fit that sun, moon, and stars, mute creatures of God, should lend their mightiest aid for its attainment. For the sake of His church—for the fulfilment of His counsels of mercy for man's salvation—God is ready to put forth His mightiest power. For the sake of His church, the Son of God exiled Himself from heaven and was clothed in the garments of human flesh. By means of His church, God will make known to a wondering universe—"to principalities and powers in heavenly places"—His own "manifold wisdom." Our little globe—a dim speck amid the glowing worlds of night—is yet, as we can hardly doubt, the "Therimopylæ of the universe," where Good and Evil fight out their last long battle. And it seems strictly in keeping with the mighty magnitude and grand proportion of things, that in the day of Israel's agony and at the very outset of their great struggle, Joshua should have prayed as he did, and that his prayer was answered and the sun refused to go down until he had witnessed the victory for God complete. N. C. B.

God hearkened to the voice of Joshua. Once more the sun burst forth, and the daylight was miraculously protracted till Israel was avenged of its enemies. Onward rolled the tide of fugitives, hotly pursued by Israel, through the pass of Nether Beth horon to Azekah, and thence to Makkedah. Here tidings were brought to Joshua, that the five kings had hid themselves in one of the caves with which that district abounds. But Joshua would not be diverted from his object. He ordered large stones to be rolled to the mouth of the cave, and its entrance to be guarded by armed men, while the rest of

the army followed the enemy and smote their "rear guard." Only broken remnants of the fugitives found shelter in the "fenced cities." A. E.

14. Before the prolonged day closed in, and the shadows of evening fell on "the Valley of Gazelles," God's promise had been fulfilled to the letter. Not a man of the enemies had stood before Joshua; all had been delivered into his hand. Long and deservedly did the marvels of that day—a day which, at one sudden blow, secured the possession of the Land of Promise to Israel—remain engraven on the memory of the nation. "There was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel." E. V.

17, 21. The identification by Professor Palmer of the village of El Mughâr (*i.e.*, *the Cave*) with *Makkedah* is most important, and shows how much may still be done in Biblical topography. It stands on a hill on the west of the road from Ashdod to Ekron, which passes through a little valley; and on the east side stands Ghuderah. Sir G. Grove had already pointed out, from the history of Joshua, that in this district Makkedah must be looked for. The caves, from which it takes its modern name, have not yet been explored. The Cave of Makkedah is forever linked with the memories of the first great victory of Joshua—the battle of Beth-horon, before referred to—which gave Israel the whole Amorite district of the south. The cave must have been a well-known one, and outside the city. To it the five kings fled after their utter rout. *Tristram*.

Makkedah was in the eastern edge of the plain of Philistia, far to the south of the opening of the valley of Ajalon. It was over thirty miles distant from the ridge west of Gibeon, by the route taken. N. C. B.—It is impossible not to be struck by the constant agreement between the recorded history and the natural geography both of the Old and New Testament. To find a marked correspondence between the scenes of the Sinaitic mountains and the events of the Israelite wanderings is not much, perhaps, but it is certainly something toward a proof of the truth of the whole narrative. The *detailed harmony* between the life of Joshua and the various scenes of his battles is a slight but true indication that we are dealing not with shadows, but with realities of flesh and blood. Such coincidences are not usually found in fables, least of all in fables of Eastern origin. *Stanley*.—The geography of Palestine, as we find it to-day, is the strongest testimony of the truth of that his-

tory which purports to emanate thence. The natural scenery of Palestine speaks in but one voice in favor of the Bible ; every word of the sacred narrative receives its best interpretation by being studied in connection with the place where it was recorded. No one can trace without joy and wonder the verification which geography pays to the history of the Holy Land. *Ritter.*

21. The original is very express that *not one single Israelite* was harmed either by word or weapon. So complete, so superhuman, so glorious was the victory. *Bush.*

27. Israel saw these monarchs, whose names had inspired such dread, grovelling in the dust before the conqueror. The chief warriors were bidden to approach, and, as a token of complete overthrow, plant their feet on the necks of the prostrate kings. "As these captive kings lay powerless before them, trodden beneath their feet, so would all their enemies who should make war upon them be laid prostrate by the Lord." They were then put to death, and their bodies hung, each on its own tree, till the evening, when they were taken down and "cast into the cave wherein they had been hid," the door of which was once more closed by the same huge stones. The kings' prison-house became their sepulchre. *E. V.*

The battle of Beth-horon or Gibeon is one of the most important in the history of the world. It is one of the few military engagements which belong equally to Ecclesiastical and to Civil History—which have decided equally the fortunes of the world and of the Church. The roll will be complete if to this we add two or three more which we shall encounter in the Jewish History ; and, in later times, the battle of the Milvian Bridge, which involved the fall of Paganism ; the battle of Poitiers, which sealed the fall of Arianism ; the battle of Bedr, which secured the rise of Mahometanism in Asia ; the battle of Tours, which checked the spread of Mahometanism in Western Europe ; the

battle of Lepanto, which checked it in Eastern Europe ; the battle of Lutzen, which determined the balance of power between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany. *Stanley.*

28. Flushed with triumph, the warriors stormed the city of Makkedah itself and put its inhabitants to the sword. Makkedah was thus the first city captured after the fall of Jericho ; nor does the place again occur in history. *H. B. T.*—Joshua contented himself with taking, demolishing, and burning those cities, but did not garrison any of them for fear of weakening his army. The scattered Canaanites in several instances no doubt took advantage of this, returned, repeopled, and put in a state of defence the cities from which they had been expelled. Hence the Israelites were obliged to conquer them a second time.

42. At one time. Heb. "at one turn, or stroke ;" i.e. in one uninterrupted course of vigorous action ; as we should say, in one campaign. The leading idea is that from the time Joshua entered upon this career of victories till it was closed there was no intermission, no cessation. **Because the Lord fought for Israel.** This clause is introduced in order to give credibility to the foregoing narrative. Viewed in any other light than as the result of omnipotence, such a tide of victories would naturally stagger all belief. *Bush.*

With characteristic promptitude Joshua pursued his success. City after city fell, tribe after tribe was exterminated in rapid succession. Of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, the brief and stern record is the same : "He left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded. All these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God fought for Israel." Southern Palestine was now conquered, the work immediately before Joshua was completed, and once more Joshua and all Israel returned to the camp at Gilgal. *E. V.*

Section 213.

CONQUEST OF NORTHERN CANAAN. RECAPITULATION OF KINGS AND TERRITORY.

JOSHUA 11 : 1-23 ; 12 : 1-24.

11 1 AND it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard thereof, that he sent to Jobab 2 king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were on the north, in the hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the low-

3 land, and in the heights of Dor on the west, to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the
 4 Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and
 5 chariots very many. And all these kings met together ; and they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid be-
 6 cause of them : for to-morrow at this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel : thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. So Joshua came, and all the peo-
 7 ple of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly, and fell upon them. And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, and they smote them, and chased them unto
 8 great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward ; and they
 9 smote them, until they left them none remaining. And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him : he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

10 And Joshua turned back at that time, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the
 11 sword : for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them : there was none
 12 left that breathed : and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and he smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly
 13 destroyed them ; as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only ; that did Joshua burn.
 14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves ; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed
 15 them, neither left they any that breathed. As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua : and so did Joshua ; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country, and all the South, and all the land of Goshen, and the lowland, and the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel, and the lowland of the same ;
 17 from mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon : and all their kings he took, and smote them, and put them to death. Joshua
 18 made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon : they took all in battle. For it
 19 was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them, that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD com-
 20 manded Moses.

21 And Joshua came at that time, and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country
 22 of Israel : Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel : only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some re-
 23 main. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD spake unto Moses ; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war.

12 1 Now these are the kings of the land, whom the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land beyond Jordan toward the sunrising, from the valley of Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the Arabah eastward : Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the
 3 valley, and half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, the border of the children of Ammon ; and the Arabah unto the sea of Chinneroth, eastward, and unto the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt
 4 Sea, eastward, the way to Beth-jeshimoth ; and on the south, under the slopes of Pisgah : and the border of Og king of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and
 5 at Edrei, and ruled in mount Hermon, and in Salecah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.
 6 Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smote them ; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

7 And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the children of Israel smote beyond Jordan westward, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir ; and Joshua gave it unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their di-

8 visions ; in the hill country, and in the lowland, and in the Arabah, and in the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the South ; the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, 9 the Hivite, and the Jebusite : the king of Jericho, one ; the king of Ai, which is beside Beth el, 10, 11 one ; the king of Jerusalem, one ; the king of Hebron, one ; the king of Jarmuth, one ; the 12, 13 king of Lachish, one ; the king of Eglon, one ; the king of Gezer, one ; the king of Debir, 14, 15 one ; the king of Geder, one ; the king of Hormah, one ; the king of Arad, one ; the king of 16 Libnah, one ; the king of Adullam, one ; the king of Makkedah, one ; the king of Beth-el, 17, 18 one ; the king of Tappuah, one ; the king of Hepher, one ; the king of Aphek, one ; the 19, 20 king of Lass Sharon, one ; the king of Madon, one ; the king of Hazor, one ; the king of Shim- 21 ron-meron, one ; the king of Achshaph, one ; the king of Taanach, one ; the king of Megiddo, 22, 23 one ; the king of Kedesh, one ; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one ; the king of Dor in the 24 height of Dor, one ; the king of Goiim in Gilgal, one ; the king of Tirzah, one : all the kings thirty and one.

Canaan was virtually subdued before the arms of Joshua in two great decisive battles ; the first against five confederate kings of Southern Palestine (ch. 10) ; the second, against a similar but larger confederation of the petty kingdoms of Northern Palestine (ch. 11). H. C. — A powerful confederacy was formed, embracing all the tribes that had not yet fallen before Joshua. E. V. — King Jabin, of Hazor — far to the north — headed this new confederacy. He issued a call to various kings and peoples — to those on the north, even beyond the Lebanon Mountains — to those on the south, “ in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west ; ” that is, of the plains of Jezreel and Megiddo, the Arabah south of the Sea of Galilee, across to the Mediterranean Sea below Carmel — also to those on the east, “ the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh ” — and to those directly west, down on the plain of Phœnicia. In answer to this call, the fighting-men of the whole region flocked together into a set place. The kings “ went out, they and all their hosts with them came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.” Lake Merom — the modern Huleh — a frozen miles north of the Sea of Galilee, is a considerable body of water, the deeper central part being about four miles long by three and a half wide. Around it are extensive marshes and plains. Probably the level country in the neighborhood led to its being selected by the confederates for an engagement, since here they would have opportunity for manœuvring their horses and chariots, on which they appear to have chiefly relied. Horses and chariots do not seem to have been encountered by the Israelites in the previous campaign. These could not be effectively used in the mountain regions of Judea. Doubtless the Israelites had a special dread of them, and hence God’s promise of success against the new confederacy, given to Joshua on the eve of battle, included a distinct

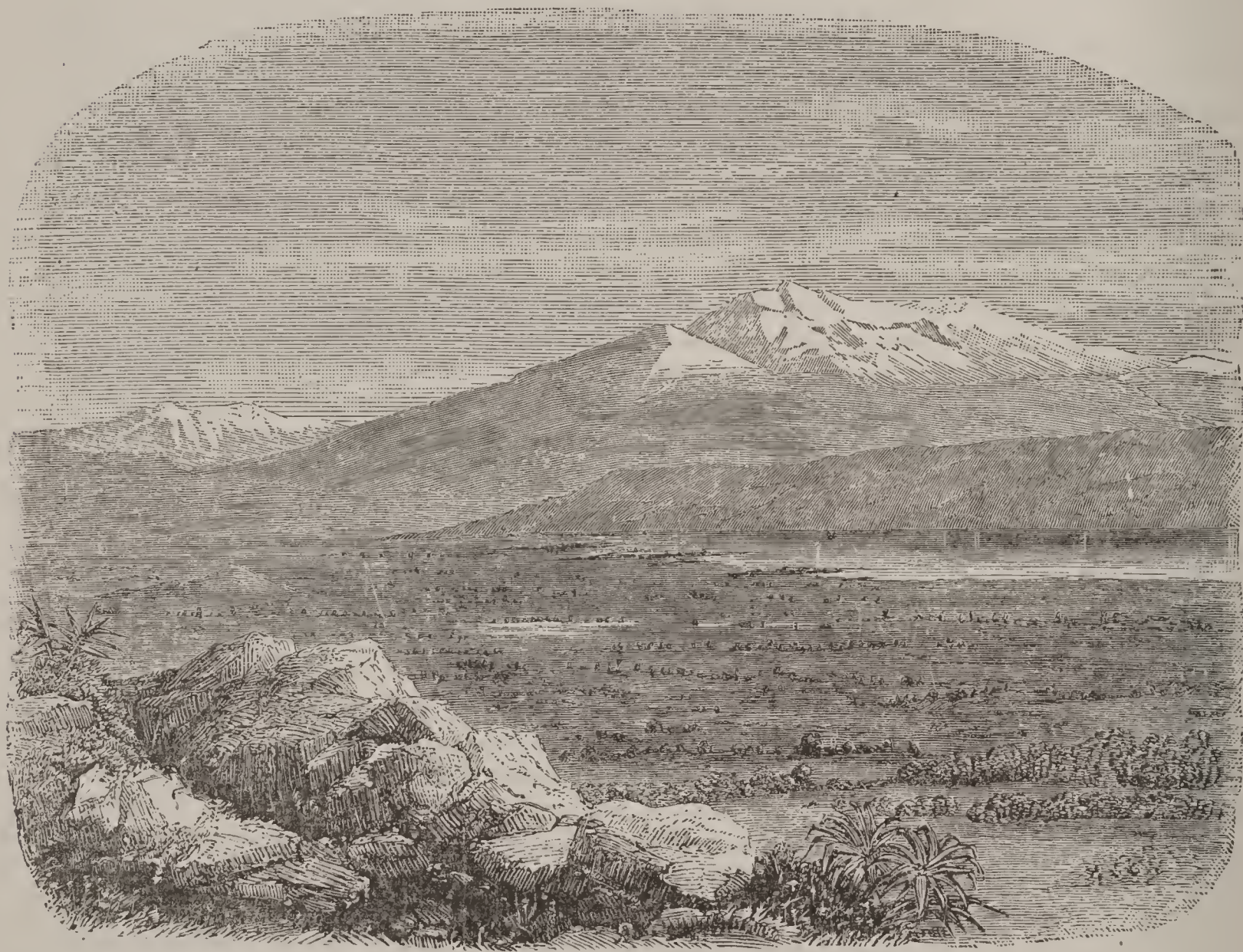
reference to them. The language is : “ Be not afraid of them ” — of the hosts of the new combination — “ for to-morrow, about this time, will I deliver them up all slain before Israel : thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.” No details concerning this victory are recorded. Joshua and his forces fell suddenly upon their enemies, and “ the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel.” To the east — into the fastnesses of Mount Hermon, and to the west — down upon the plain of Phœnicia, and across to the great and strong maritime city of Sidon, the beaten allies fled. It is specially declared that Joshua hamstrung the captured war-horses and burnt the chariots, according to the divine command. N. C. B.

3. These nations were thus distributed : “ The Hittites,” or sons of Heth, “ the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwelt in the mountains ; ” “ the Canaanites ” dwelt in the midland, “ by the sea,” westward, and “ by the coast of Jordan,” eastward ; and “ the Hivites ” in Mount Lebanon, under Hermon, in the land of Gilead, northward. *Hales.*

5-7. The highland plateau west of the *Waters of Merom* has always been fertile and well peopled, and was the centre of the Canaanitish power in the north before and after the conquest by Joshua. From the head of the Lake of Galilee to the Waters of Merom, a distance in a straight line of ten miles, the course of the Jordan is through a rich but deserted plain, shut in, as elsewhere in its course, by the enclosing ranges. There are many mounds in this plain, marking the site of perished villages, but not one inhabited, though here and there the wattle huts of the stationary Arabs or the black tents of the wandering tribes may be seen. But the lofty plateau which faces the little Lake of Huleh, the *Waters of Merom*, on the west side, is full of ruins, many of which recall Scripture names. The hills descend precipitously, and the ruins are crowded near their brow. *Merom*

is only mentioned in the Bible as the scene of the great battle in which Joshua utterly broke the power of Jabin, King of Hazor, and the confederate Canaanites of the north. This battle was for the north what that of Beth-horon was for the south. It was the last combined struggle against the conqueror. All were gathered for it from Philistia to Hermon. "They went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots

diers burst upon them. Taken thus by surprise, their immense numbers only increased the confusion of the Canaanites, which the horses and chariots would render more inextricable. The rout was complete. The Canaanites were chased westward to Zidon and eastward to the valley of Mizpeh. The conqueror returned to finish the action by the capture of Hazor. This city, like Ai and Jericho, was burned. The rest of the cities taken in this campaign were simply pillaged, and left standing "each on its own



HULEH PLAIN. SCENE OF JOSHUA'S BATTLE WITH JABIN.

very many." It must have been in the low plain, west of the Lake, that the army of Israel fell suddenly upon them, routed them utterly, and chased them westward over the hills to Great Zidon and north-eastward up the Jordan valley to the plain of Mizpeh or Cælo-Syria. H. B. T.

7. Suddenly. As before on so many occasions, Joshua's prompt decisiveness secured him the victory. Almost before the kings could have learned that he had left Gilgal, he and his sol-

hill" (5 : 13). E. V.—The actual features of the land are seen to be entwined with the Scripture history, in a way most strongly to uphold it as veritable and to exhibit it as vividly real. The natural features of Palestine—its fountains, its lakes, its rivers, its mountains, its plains, its peculiarities of climate and soil and productions—are mute yet eloquent witnesses for the truth of the Scriptures, and expounders of the Bible as the Book of God. N. C. B.

8. Unto great Zidon. A well-known

city of ancient Phœnicia, situated on the east coast of the Mediterranean, about twenty-five miles north of Tyre, fifty south of Berytus (Beyroot), and sixty-six west of Damascus. Its modern name is *Said*. The epithet *great*, here affixed to it, is expressive of *number* rather than of *size*, and implies not only its *populousness*, but the *extent and variety of its resources* of every kind. *Bush*.—Sidon is mentioned in Gen. 10 : 19, as marking one of the limits of the Canaanite, and it appears to have acquired importance at a very early period ; for we find Joshua here alluding to it as “great Sidon,” and Homer makes special mention of the skill of the Sidonian workmen ; the embroidered robes of Andromache, and the bowl given as a prize by Achilles at the games in honor of Patroclus, were of Sidonian workmanship. *Wilson*.

To live carelessly after the manner of the Sidonians (Ju. 18 : 17), became the proverbial synonym of perfect prosperity. Her merchant ships sailed over every sea. She built strong cities along the shore—Beirût, and Gebal, and Arvad, and Accho, and Dor, and many more. She planted colonies in Cyprus and the Grecian Isles, in Libya and in Spain, while by her side she nourished her fair daughter Tyre until she overgrew and quite eclipsed the mother. Then began her long and sad decline. The streams of her prosperity were dried up or diverted. The proud Pharaohs from the Nile—the stern Assyrian from distant Nineveh—the cruel Chaldean and Persian from Babylon—the rough he-goat from Grecia, and the king of fierce countenance from the Tiber, all helped to lay poor Sidon in the dust. And, long after, those locusts which came out of the bottomless pit, with Apollyon at their head, completed the work during those dismal days when men sought death but could not find it. And yet Sidon still exists, and has always clung to life with a strange tenacity. Her history runs parallel with the march of time, down the ceaseless current of human generations. Not so Tyre. Long ages have rolled away since continental Tyre sunk beneath the “burden” of prophecy, and the very site where she stood was lost. *Thompson*.

10, 11. The destruction of *Hazor* is particularly recorded, because in it and by the king thereof, this daring design against Israel was laid. The king of Hazor escaped with his life out of the battle, and got back into his own city. There he was slain, and his city, for his sake, burned. Yet we find that the remains of it being not well looked after by Israel, the Canaanites rebuilt it and settled there under another king of the same name (Ju. 4 : 2). *H*.

13. The cities that stood. It appears that the Israelites forbore to destroy those cities which were seated on an eminence, and of greater strength, reserving them for their own occupation. *Wells*.

15. The frequent repetition of God’s order is to be carefully noted, as showing that Israel’s action was exceptional and performed solely at God’s command.

16. Joshua captured : (1) the mountain country ; (2) the Negeb (south of the mountain country) ; (3) Goshen (the southern slopes of the mountains) ; (4) the Shephelah (Philistine country) ; (5) the Arabah (Jordan and Dead Sea valley) ; (6) the mountain of Israel (the northern mountains) ; (7) the northern Shephelah (the upper part of the Shephelah). Compare ch. 12 : 8. *Crosby*.

All the South or the Negeb. The mountain plateau in the northeast of the desert is full of interest, both to the geographer and to the Biblical student. This plateau is called Jebel el Magráh, and is about seventy miles in length, and from forty to fifty broad, commencing at Jebel ’Araif, and extending northward by a series of steps or terraces to within a short distance of Beersheba, from which it is separated by Wády er Raknuth from the mountains of the same name. It projects into the Tih (the desert) much in the same way as the Tih projects into Sinai, and, like it also, terminates in steep escarpments toward the south, falling away to a lower level on the southeastern side. This mountain plateau is the “South” or South Country. *Palmer*. (See Vol. II., Map, title-page.)

17. From Mount Halak unto Baal-gad. “From Dan to Beersheba” (2 S. 3 : 10 ; 24 : 2) was in David’s day the popular expression for the whole country. Two other landmarks are mentioned here and 12 : 7 by the sacred historian ; “from the Mount Halak that goeth up to Seir even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon.” Mount Halak was in the parallel of Beersheba, and Baal-gad is identical with Banias, four miles east of Dan. These were the limits of what we may call “the land in possession.” The “land of promise” was much larger. *Porter*.—As the result of this *third campaign*, Israel was master of the whole land from Mount Halak (the *smooth mountain*), at the ascent to Mount Seir, on the south, to Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon, on the north. But a much longer time was required for the subjugation of the numerous kings, who held each his own fortified city. *P. S.*—Altogether the war in the south and north must

have occupied at least seven years. From Josh. 14 : 10 we learn that forty-five years had elapsed since the spies returned to Kadesh. But as thirty-eight of these were spent in the wanderings in the wilderness, it follows that the wars for the occupation of Canaan must have lasted seven years. A. E.

20. The meaning here is simply that having sinned for a long tract of ages against the light of conscience and providence, God was now pleased to leave them to a *judicial hardness of heart*, to give them up to vain confidence, pride, stubbornness, and malignity, that they might bring upon themselves his righteous vengeance and be utterly destroyed. This result is said to be "of or from the Lord," because he did not interpose to prevent it. *Bush.*

The Old Testament (like the New) always speaks of hardening only in connection with a divine testimony in revelation—in reference to a divine revelation offered to the sinner but rejected by him. This is applicable to *Pharaoh*, who sees the miracles of Moses, which forced even the Egyptian Magi to feel (Ex. 8 : 19), "this is God's finger;" "but," it is continued, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened." The same thing is applicable to Israel in view of the divine guidance in the wilderness; and according to this also, that which is said of the *Canaanitish tribes* (Josh. 11 : 20) is to be explained: "For it was of Jehovah to harden their heart to strive with Israel, that He might destroy them, and they might find no grace." The Canaanitish tribes merited punishment on account of their idolatrous abominations; and now that this judgment was executed upon them in the form of extermination, it was effected by themselves through their hardening themselves to do battle with Israel, for whom God manifestly fought. In such passages the point is not a dark and hidden decree of reprobation, but a divine decree of judgment, well-grounded and perfectly manifest. The course of this hardening is described in Is. 6 : 10; incapability to *hear* the divine word and to *see* God's ways connects itself with dulness of *heart*, and this again reacts on the heart so that its insusceptibility becomes incurable. O.

21. The mountains of Judah and Israel were the habitations of those mountains of men; but neither their height, nor the strength of their caves, nor the difficulty of the passes to them, could secure these mighty men from the sword of Joshua. The cutting off of the sons of Anak is particularly mentioned because these had been such a terror to the spies forty years before, and their bulk and strength had been thought an in-

superable difficulty in the way of the reducing of Canaan. H.—Though these Anakims were now for the most part reduced, yet numbers of them escaped and took refuge in the country of the Philistines, and settled there, from whom Goliath and other giants descended. After a time some of them returned with followers and rebuilt the cities from which they had been expelled; and Caleb and Othniel, to whom that region was assigned, vanquished and destroyed them after the division of the land (ch. 14 : 6-15; 15 : 13-17).

23. So Joshua took the whole land. Not absolutely the whole, for in ch. 13 : 1 the Lord is represented as saying to Joshua, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed," but all the country described here and in the preceding chapter; the greatest and best part of it. *Bush.*

12. We have in this chapter a recapitulation of all the victories thus far achieved. As the writer is about to enter upon a particular account of the distribution of the land among the tribes, he here pauses to give a general view of the territory to be divided, including the tracts on both sides the Jordan. This he does by specifying the kings, rather than the countries over which they reigned; for the power of a state is concentrated in the person of its sovereign, and such an enumeration presents the subject more vividly to the mind of the reader. The first six verses contain a list of the kings on the east side of Jordan, conquered by Moses, with their territories, and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with a catalogue of those that were reduced by Joshua. *Bush.*

The Book of Joshua transports the reader across the Jordan to Jericho, takes him from the camp at Gilgal to the high hills of the Amorite princes and the other Canaanite kings; and, after the victory is won, spreads out before the eye a bright and living picture of the land as it lay divided among the twelve tribes of Israel. From the wilderness of Arabia, from Kadesh-Barnea and Beersheba in the south, to the sources of the Jordan near Dan, and to the heights of Hermon and Lebanon, the Promised Land comes out in the narrative of Joshua in all its unity, and with all its characteristic features in the best possible manner to aid us in our study of its geography. *Ritter.*

12 : 3. The *Galilean Lake* is rarely mentioned in the Old Testament, where it is known as "*the Sea of Chinnereth*" (Nu. 34 : 11), and is given as on the eastern border of the western tribes; and again in Josh. 11 : 2 and here, where it is called "*Chinnereth*," and ch. 13 : 27, "*the edge*

of the sea of Chinnereth." It never recurs till we meet it, as the chief scene of our Lord's ministry. H. B. T.

12:24. *All the kings, thirty and one.* From the number of these kings, we learn how numerous and yet how small were the petty principalities into which the land of Canaan was divided. The extent of this country from north to south was not more than one hundred and fifty miles, and not more than fifty from east to west. In like manner were nearly all the different nations of the world divided. The consequence was that civil wars and border feuds continually prevailed, making them an easy prey to foreign invaders. Thus history informs us that when Cæsar invaded Britain there were no less than four kings in the single county of Kent. *Bush.*

The results of the whole conquest, besides the previous victories over Sihon and Og, are summed up in the subjugation of thirty-one kings of cities on the west of the Jordan, belonging to the seven nations, which had been mentioned in the first promise to Abraham, the Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, Hittites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Perizzites. Special notice is taken of the extermination of the giant Anakim, who had struck such terror into the spies, and who were only left in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, though they had before occupied the whole of the central highlands, with Hebron and other cities. The defeat of these thirty-one kings did not involve, in every case, the capture of their cities. Jerusalem, for example, was not taken till after the death of Joshua, and its citadel remained in the hands of the Jebusites till the time of David. Many other cities held out for a long time. But besides such isolated posts there were whole tracts of country—"very much land"—yet to be subdued, within the limits which God had originally named, and which He now once more promised. These were, speaking generally, the plains along the Mediterranean, the coast of Phœnicia, and the ranges of Lebanon. P. S.

The conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua is distinguished from all others by the four following features, which, at the same time, mark it as subservient to the kingdom of God:—(1) That the conquering nation was the people of God, to whom of old the Lord had appointed this land for an inheritance (De. 32: 8, 9): (2) That the destruction of the inhabitants was a judgment from God, which had long ago been announced (Gen. 15), and was then carried out; (3) That God himself took an extraordinary part in this conquest by his aid and co-operation; (4) That it represents, typically, the way of ob-

taining the heavenly Canaan. Thus no one need wonder that the Book of Joshua too, with all its histories of war, is found in the Bible; and likewise the distribution of the land, which occupies a great part of the book, has its significance for the history of the kingdom of God. C. G. B.

The period of the Conquest, properly speaking, began from the passage of the brook Zered under Moses: it was not finally closed till the capture of Jerusalem by David. But, in a more limited sense, it may be confined to the period during which the territory, afterward known by the name of Palestine, was definitively occupied as their own by the Israelites. The Israelite conquest of Palestine, although it stands above all other like events from its intrinsic grandeur, yet is in itself but one among a succession of waves which have swept over the country, and each of which may be used as an illustration of those that have gone before and after. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Arabians, Turks, Crusaders, French, English, have followed in their wake; the Philistines, the Canaanites, the aboriginal inhabitants, accompanied or preceded them. A. P. S.

As the Hebrew records are silent with respect to Egypt and Assyria during the entire period from Joshua to Samuel, so the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions are silent with respect to the Hebrews. If there is not a positive, there is a negative accord between them. From the Hebrews' account of themselves we gather that during their long period of struggle with the Canaanitish nations, they were unmolested by either Egypt or Assyria. From the accounts given by the Egyptians and Assyrians of the same period, we learn that they led no expeditions into the country occupied by the Hebrews during these centuries. G. R.

The Bible history is in thorough agreement with that which the monuments of Egypt and Assyria have been found to furnish. No serious historical discrepancy has been pointed out between the contents of these monumental records and the facts of Bible history. On the other hand, the testimony, at a hundred points, to the accuracy of Scripture is very remarkable. One of the most interesting of these testimonies is that borne by the Egyptian records to the condition of Palestine as parcelled out among a large number of independent chiefs or kings at a very early time. Another fact which we gather from these records is, that the conquest of Canaan under Joshua must have been a very serious

and difficult undertaking. Though the separate chiefs may have been but feeble, they were accustomed to act in concert, and their combinations, such as Joshua encountered, were very formidable. The Khita or Hittite race, which prevailed in Western Syria, was indeed a very formidable one, able on some occasions, as the records show, to give no little trouble to the power of Egypt. W. G. B.

The narrative of Joshua represents to us the nation of the Hittites as being at the time of the conquest of Canaan the principal power in Upper Syria, or the country between Palestine and the Euphrates. This fact is abundantly

confirmed by the Egyptian remains, which show us the Hittites (Sheta) as the chief opponent of Egypt, in the valley of the Orontes, during a period which must certainly include within it the judgeship of Joshua. And as the Hittites appear in Joshua to be the dominant race to the north of Galilee, so does the whole narrative from Exodus to Samuel represent the Philistines as the dominant people of the tract between Judea and Egypt. Here, once more, the Egyptian records agree, since they assign to the Philistines the same sort of lead among the enemies of Egypt in the south which belongs to the Hittites in the regions of the north. G. R.

Section 214.

THE LAND OF CANAAN: TOPOGRAPHY AND CHARACTERISTICS. ADAPTATION TO ITS PURPOSE AND WITNESS TO ITS DESIGN. ITS ANCIENT PEOPLES. ITS TYPICAL ASPECT.

PALESTINE, OR THE HOLY LAND.

Name. The Hebrew word which in our English version of the Bible is translated "Palestine" in Joel 3 : 4, and "Palestina" in Ex. 15 : 14, and Is. 14 : 29, 31, is only found elsewhere in the Psalms, and is there rendered by "Philistia." In the Bible the name is used for the country of the Philistines alone, but it afterward came to signify the whole land occupied by the Jews, and in this sense we find it employed by Josephus, Philo, and some of the writers in the Talmud. The country is alluded to in the Bible under several other names ; it is the "land of Canaan" of the patriarchs and Joshua ; "the land" of Ruth, Jeremiah, and St. Luke ; the "holy land" of Zechariah ; the "glorious land" of Daniel and Amos ; the "land of Jehovah" of Hosea, the "land of promise" of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; the "land of Israel" of the Monarchy ; and the "land of Judea" of the New Testament. It is now most commonly known under its name of Palestine, or the Holy Land.

Position. No one can help being struck by the peculiar position of Palestine in regard to the powerful nations immediately surrounding it, as well as by its remarkable geographical position, almost in the centre of the ancient world ; and it is hardly too much to say that in no other country could that striking combination of moral and physical conditions have been found which

rendered Palestine the most fitting theatre for those momentous events which have had such a great and lasting influence on the history of the world.

Separated from the great nations of the East by the arid plains which lie beyond the Jordan, and from Egypt by the southern desert, Palestine was from the very first a country set apart from the rest of the world, and this isolation was increased by the religion of the Jews, which forbade their forming any alliance with the surrounding nations. No great highway led through the country ; the hosts of Egypt on their way to Assyria, those of Assyria, of Babylon, and of Persia on their way to Egypt, swept by it along the low maritime plain which fringed the coast ; their object was the conquest of the rival empire, and the hill country of Palestine hardly possessed sufficient attractions to induce them to turn aside from the most direct road to the end they had in view. Napoleon, when he was asked, during his Syrian campaign, to visit Jerusalem, replied that it did not lie in the line of his operations, and it was probably to a similar feeling on the part of the leaders of the hostile armies that the Jewish nation for so many years owed its independence ; it was only after the lapse of centuries that the country became involved in disaster by neglecting the Divine commands and forming alliances with one or other of the contending powers. Later, Alexander passed over the country on his way to Oriental

conquest, and when, on his death, the empire which he had formed fell to pieces, it became the battle-field of the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies ; later still, under Roman dominion, Palestine became one of the thoroughfares between the East and the West, and it was during these troubled times that a stream of Western civilization flowed into the country, exercising a powerful influence on the arts, the mode of thought, and the history of the Jews during the last three centuries of their existence as a nation. Isolated as Palestine was from all other countries, its geographical position with reference to the three great continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as to the Mediterranean and Red Seas, was such that, when the fulness of time came, the knowledge of the Gospel could be spread to the remotest corners of the earth, and it is not unworthy of notice that the principal means by which the glad tidings were conveyed was that sea which had once seemed an almost impassable barrier.

The physical character of Palestine is no less remarkable than its geographical position ; there is no other country which, within the same narrow limits, contains so many striking contrasts, or exhibits features at once so varied and comprehensive that, as has been justly observed, there is no land or nation in the world which does not find something of itself reflected there. In the north are the lofty peaks of Lebanon and Mount Hermon, rarely free from snow, with their cedars, their alpine flora, and their wild thunder-storms, to which allusion would seem to be made in the 29th Psalm ; in the south is the deep depression of the Dead Sea, with its tropical climate, and a flora and fauna similar in many respects to those of the lake regions of Equatorial Africa. On the west the rich corn-growing plains of Philistia are in close proximity to the sandy, unprofitable desert of the south ; in the centre the terraced hills, with their Italian climate so suitable for the cultivation of the vine, olive, and fig, pass almost imperceptibly into the barren wilderness of Judea ; and on the east the downs of Moab and Gilead, with their abundant pasturage, are bordered by the dry and thirsty land of the great eastern desert. Lastly, there is the "great sea" which is so frequently alluded to in the Psalms, in familiar passages which come home with especial force to the hearts and minds of the people of a great maritime nation such as England. From the Phœnician traders who did their "business in great waters," the Psalmist would hear of "the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep," and how, after one of the wild westerly gales which

visit the coast of Palestine, the ships in which they sailed would "mount up to heaven" and "go down again to the depths," reeling "to and fro" and staggering "like a drunken man."

Extent. Every writer has noticed the narrow limits of the Holy Land. From Dan to Beersheba is no more than 140 miles, and from the Mediterranean to Jordan the average breadth is only 40 miles, containing less than 6000 square miles.

Physical Features. Perhaps the most striking feature in the general aspect of Palestine is its natural division into four parallel strips of territory—the *coast plain*, the *hill country*, the *Jordan valley*, and the *eastern plateau*.

The *Coast Plain* extends without a break from the desert south of Gaza to the long ridge of Mount Carmel on the north ; beyond Carmel lies the plain of Acre, stretching northward to the headland of Ras el-Nakura (Ladder of Tyre), which separates it from the long narrow plain of Phœnicia. The two latter sections of the coast plain are not mentioned in the Bible ; the first contains within its limits the plain of Sharon reaching from Carmel to Jaffa, and the plains of Philistia extending southward to the margin of the desert. The greater portion of the plain is flat, but north of Jaffa there are some low hills, through which at a remote period tunnels were cut to drain the marsh land lying behind them ; the soil is rich and of marvellous fertility, producing year after year magnificent crops, though the ground is tilled in the rudest manner, without manure and without irrigation. The broad expanse of the Philistine plain, covered as it is at harvest time with a waving mass of golden grain, unbroken by a single hedge, is one of the most beautiful sights in Palestine. Under the burning sun of Syria the stubble becomes so dry that a single spark might kindle a flame that would run before the wind like the fires which sweep over the American prairies, and strict precautions are taken by the Bedawi to prevent the occurrence of such a calamity. We cannot, therefore, wonder that the Philistines were stirred to fierce wrath when Samson turned his three hundred foxes with their firebrands "into the standing corn," "in the time of wheat harvest ;" fanned by the steady land breeze, which at that season of the year blows every morning for three or four hours, the flames would spread with fiery speed, licking up corn, olives, and vines, until they were checked by the sea ; and in those days, when the intercourse between country and country was so slight, the loss of their harvest must have been felt almost as a national calamity by the Philistines. *Wilson.*



MAP PREPARED FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THIS VOLUME.

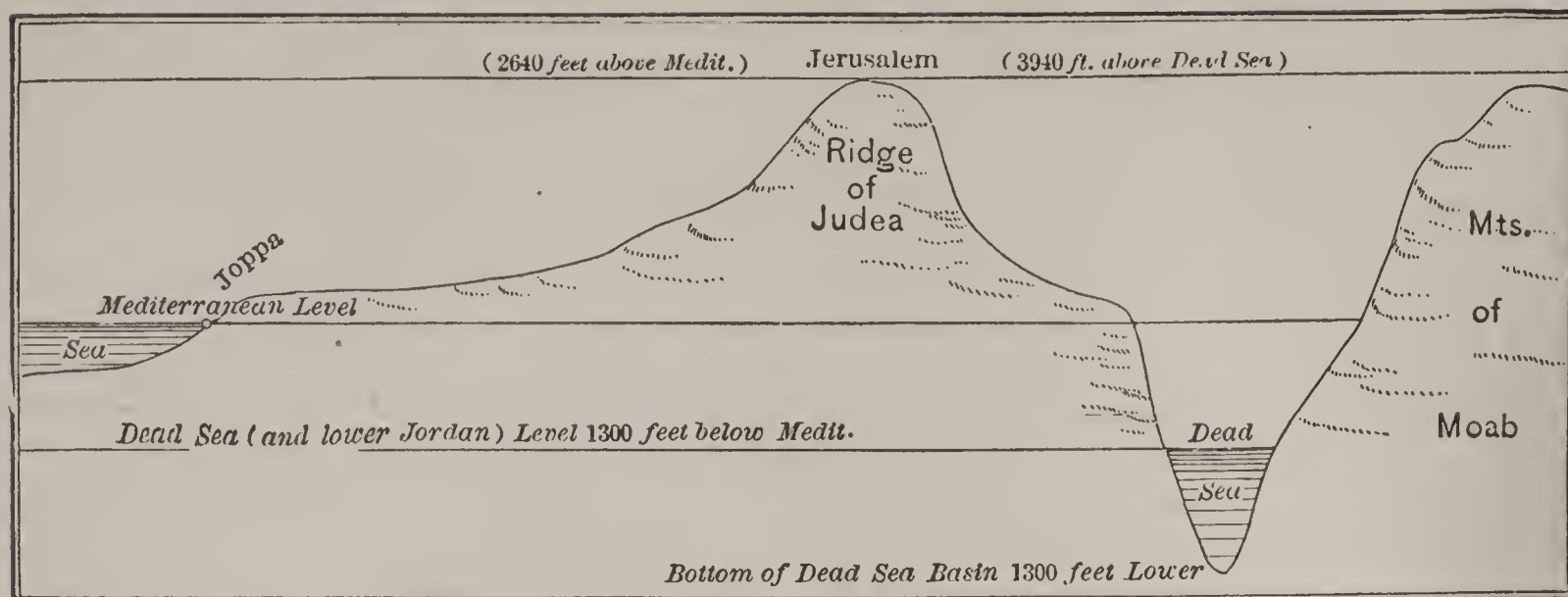
The plain of Philistia is thirty-two miles long, from Ekron to Gaza, with a breadth of from nine to sixteen miles, and a height above the sea of from 50 to 300 feet. In the hill country (behind the plain of Philistia), the spurs, not more than one mile or so apart, are often separated by narrow ravines 1500 to 2000 feet deep, at the bottom of which, in the rainy season, rapid torrents roll. *Warren.*

The *Hill country* commences about fifty miles south of Jerusalem, and runs northward through the land to the plain of Esdraelon, beyond which it rises again and is connected with the Lebanon by the hills of Galilee. This highland district varies but slightly in altitude, and its general appearance as seen from the sea is that of a long wall without any prominent peak to break the monotony of its outline. Its average height may be gathered from the following altitudes : —Hebron, 2840 feet ; Mount of Olives, 2665 feet ; Neby Samwil, 2900 feet ; Mount Ebal, 3029 feet ; Neby Ismail, 1790 feet ; and Jebel Jer-muk, 4000 feet. The hills are broad-backed, and present none of the grander features of mountain scenery, but every here and there rounded summits rise above the general level of the range, and afford striking panoramas of the surrounding country ; such are the views from Neby Samwil, Mount Ebal, Little Hermon, Neby Ismail, near Nazareth, and the hill on which Safed stands, each embracing no inconsiderable portion of the Holy Land. The effect of the views is increased by the transparency of the atmosphere, which diminishes apparent distances in a manner unknown in moister climes, and by the rich and varying tints that light up the steep slopes of the Jordan valley. Through the centre of the hill country runs the main road from Jerusalem, through Samaria, to Galilee, following nearly the line of the watershed, and passing close to many of the chief cities of Judah and Israel ; it is the route now usually followed by travellers, and was probably always one of the most important thoroughfares in the country. East of this road the hills descend abruptly to the Jordan valley ; west of it, they fall more gradually to the coast plain. The wonderful ramifications of the valleys which cut up the hill country on either side of the watershed form one of the peculiar features of Palestine topography ; rising frequently in small upland plains of great richness, such as El Mukhna, near Nablus ; the valleys at first fall very rapidly, and then, after a tortuous course, reach the plain on the one side and the Jordan valley on the other. The effect of this is to split up the country into a series of knife-like ridges, generally preserving an east

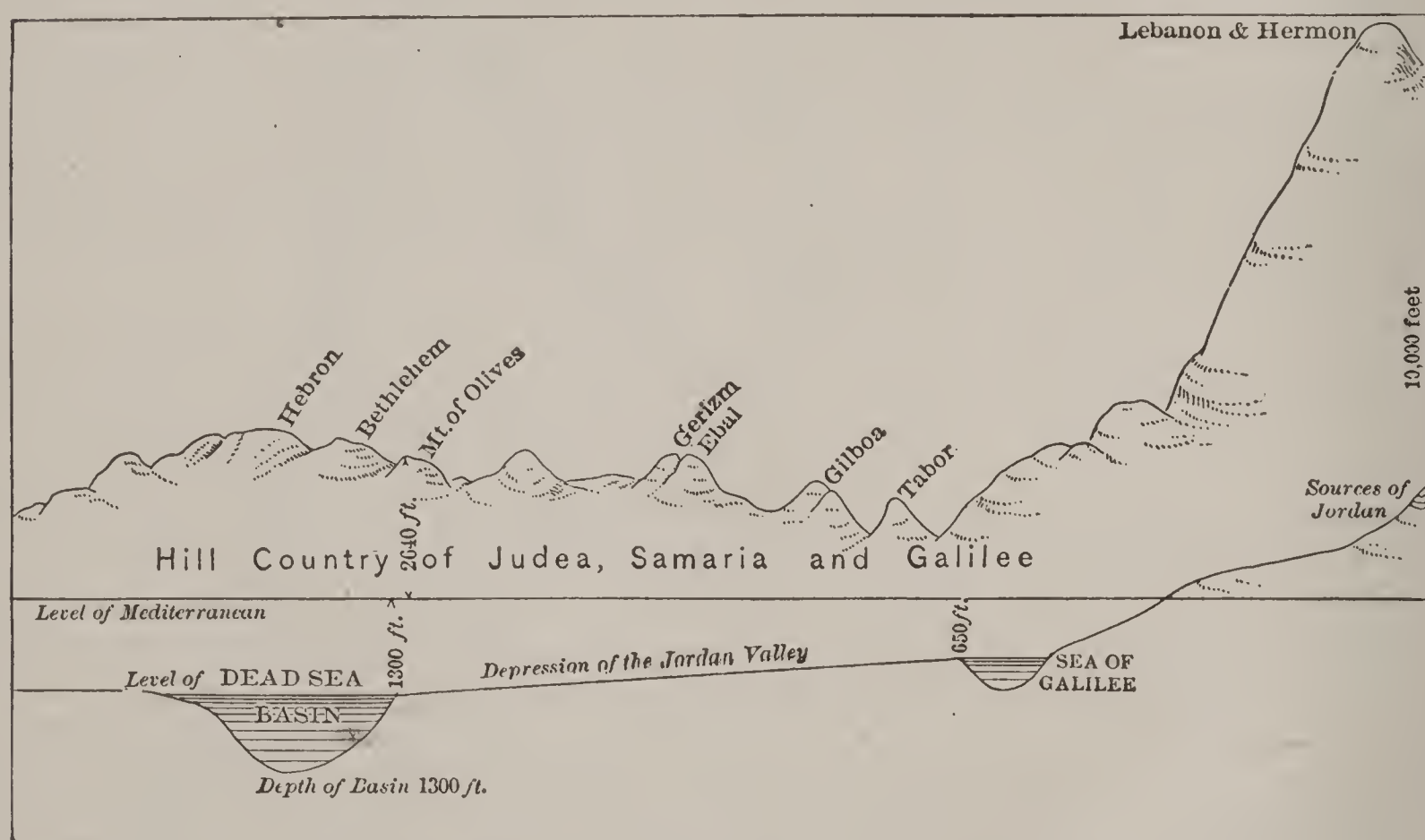
and west direction, and effectually preventing any movement over the country from south to north, except along the central highway ; the valley of the Kishon, which spreads out into the broad plain of Esdraelon, and the valley of Jez-reel, are the only two which are more than mere torrent-beds. The soil of the hill country, except in the wilderness of Judea, southeast of Jerusalem, and some portions of the eastern slopes of the hills, is extremely rich, and where cultivated very productive. Everywhere traces are found of that "terrace-culture" for which the hill-sides were so peculiarly adapted, and which the Jews brought to such great perfection. Professor Palmer found the walls of old vineyards far south of Beersheba, on the very verge of the desert, and there is hardly a hill in Palestine on which ruined walls and the cisterns in which the scanty rainfall was husbanded are not found. It would appear from several indications in the Psalms that the land was highly cultivated when the Israelites came into possession. There is evidence, too, of the existence of large forests in certain districts, especially in Galilee.

The *Jordan Valley* runs nearly parallel to the coast from the base of Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea, and contains the one great river of the country, the Jordan, a purely inland river, like no other on the face of the earth, "having no embouchure on the sea, and closing its course in the very deepest part of the Old World." After the junction of the three streams which rise respectively at Hasbeiya, Tell el-Kady, and Baniyas, the Jordan spreads out into the Lake el-Huleh, and descends rapidly to the Sea of Galilee, whence it follows a tortuous course wholly below the level of the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. On either side of the river is a strip of plain of varying width, with a rich soil, formerly irrigated by the numerous springs and by the streams that descend from the hills, which rise abruptly on the east and west.

The *Eastern Plateau* has a general altitude of 2000 feet, and is tolerably uniform in its character. *Wilson.*—Though the trans-Jordanic range is quite as high as the hills of Western Palestine, it is not so broken up. Only four streams of any size furrow it : the Yarmuk, the Jabbok, the Callirhoe, and the Arnon. There is a beauty in Gilead, a richness in Moab, and a grandeur in Bashan, which makes it hard to believe that only the narrow cleft of the Jordan valley separates them from the gray hills and naked rocks of Western Palestine. *Tristram.*



WEST AND EAST PROFILE SECTION. (EXAGGERATED.)



SOUTH AND NORTH PROFILE SECTION. (EXAGGERATED.)

BRIEFER OUTLINE VIEW OF WESTERN PALESTINE.

Palestine proper may be very briefly described as a mountainous central district, running north and south, flanked on each side by a broad plain. The plain on the *west*, or that of the sea-coast, has an average width of twelve or fourteen miles. Its southern portion, from Gaza northward nearly to Jaffa, was the ancient Philistia, which included five great cities. Its middle portion, from Jaffa northward to Mount Carmel, which juts into the sea, was the plain of Sharon. North of Carmel on the coast is the plain of Acre, and north of that the narrow strip of ancient Phoenicia.

The plain on the *east* flank of Palestine is the

valley of the Jordan, lying between the Dead Sea on the south and the Sea of Galilee on the north. This is narrower than the plain of the coast, reaching a breadth of only eight or ten miles in its widest part, at Jericho.

Between these two plains—of the west and the east—of the Mediterranean and the Jordan—lay the principal bulk of Palestine—a *mountain district*—extending from below Hebron on the south to the plain of Esdraelon on the north, eighty miles long by thirty wide. This was the country held most securely by the Israelites after their conquest of the land. Here dwelt the great historic and rival tribes—Judah on the south and Ephraim on the north—with little Benjamin compressed between them. Here were the cities

of greatest fame—here the chief capitals of government, and the chief sanctuaries of religion. This district—especially its southern half, the Judea of the New Testament—is indescribably rough and rocky. It is corrugated with ridges, or embossed with hill tops. The northern half—the Samaria of the New Testament—shows more continuous mountain chains and broader valleys. The general height of this district varies from twenty-eight hundred feet—that of Hebron, to seventeen hundred—that of Shechem. Perhaps the average is nearly twenty-two hundred—that of Jerusalem.

To complete this outline view, we should mark the broad *Plain of Esdraelon*, sweeping across the country east and west, along the northern end of the central region just described; and then the hill country of Galilee rising steeply out of this plain, and extending northward up the high slopes of Lebanon and Hermon. N. C. B.

The southern slope of the highlands of Galilee and the northern elevation of Mount Ephraim are intersected by three plains, which are connected among themselves, and run across the highlands west of Jordan, from the sea-shore to the banks of the Jordan. These are—the plain of Acco by the sea, the plain of Jezreel, and that of Bethshean, which stretches toward Jordan. The *plain of Jezreel*, or of *Esdraelon* (Josh. 17 : 16), is exceedingly fruitful. It is the most extensive valley of Palestine. Its connection with the two others makes it the most open plain in the country. Hence it always formed the central point of military evolutions. According to the barometrical measurements of *Schubert*, it rises 439 feet above the level of the sea. A narrow rocky valley to the northeast, which runs between the base of Carmel and the projecting ledges of the mountains of Zebulun, connects it with the *plain of Acco*. The *Kishon*, which rises at the foot of Tabor, flows through the whole extent of these two plains into the sea. At the northeastern termination of the plain of Jezreel rise Mount Tabor in majestic beauty, and south of it, running from east to west for about two German miles, the chain of hills called *Little Hermon*; still farther south, and stretching to the northwest, *Mount Gilboa*. A rocky elevation forms the watershed, and connects the western terminations of these two mountains, embracing at the same time the plain of Bethshean, which extends to the *banks of Jordan*.

From the plain of Acco, the northeastern side of *Mount Carmel* (Jebel Mâr Elyâs) rises abruptly to a height of 1500 feet, forming a fruitful field, the hills of which are watered by many rills, and

covered successively by meadows, with their rich bloom, by pleasant valleys, by fruitful vineyards, olive groves, and corn-fields. It runs for three German miles (from southeast to northwest) to the Mediterranean. There it terminates in a promontory—bearing the same name (1200 feet high)—in which nature has formed thousands of caverns, which have served for the dwelling, first of Troglodites, and then of monks. The southwestern side of the mountain slopes into the plain of Sharon. As Carmel to the northwest, so Mount Gilboa to the northeast, forms a kind of advanced post of MOUNT EPHRAIM. The latter rises abruptly from the plain of Jezreel, and attains its highest elevation in the neighborhood of Shechem. *Kurtz*.

As we rode slowly onward we were able to take in, almost at a glance, the whole of the magnificent plain of Esdraelon. From the shores of the Mediterranean, where it is guarded on one side by the noble promontory of Carmel, and on the other by the less lofty headland of Akka, it extends over a space of more than twenty miles to the banks of the Jordan, being separated into minor valleys by mountains as it approaches toward the river. Its average width is between ten and twelve miles, the richly-wooded range of Carmel, and the less bold mountains of Samaria, bounding it on the south, while on the north it is hemmed in by the green hills of Galilee. It possesses an extraordinary natural fertility, and is so level that every inch of it is as capable of culture as the plains of Lombardy. Men competent to judge have declared that, if this single plain were brought under the hand of skilled agriculture, it would yield grain enough to support the entire population within the limits of the Holy Land. *A. Thomson*.

Noteworthy Points of Detail.

With the exception of some volcanic rocks near the Lake of Galilee, limestone is the sole formation in the country. Blocks of rock, ravines, and caves are found everywhere, being the characteristic features of a limestone district. The whole history of the country accords with this fact. W. G. B.—Perhaps no one aspect of Palestine, along its central line of hills, strikes the stranger more with surprise than the amount and roughness of its rock surface. At the first glance the thought of the superficial observer is that of disappointment. He sees it almost treeless, rocky and rough and neglected, and thinks that it is, after all, a much overrated and overpraised country. But when he looks more closely, he perceives that all this rock, being lime-

stone, and not sandstone nor granite, when it pulverizes, carries with it, not barrenness but fertility. He observes how the noble olive grows in successive tiers up the sides of seemingly hopeless hills, what sunny exposures are everywhere offered to the vine, and how green are the wheat-fields even when wedged in among the cliffs—and how all these hills appear once to have been diligently and laboriously laid out in terraces almost to their tops—and he changes his mind. He travels through a multitude of fertile valleys, and crosses plains like that of Esdraelon, as rich of soil as a western prairie, almost abandoned now. He passes from the deep tropical valley of the Jordan by the Dead Sea to the high mountains of Galilee, and the still higher range of Lebanon, and sees how this little country, not larger than Wales, is fitted to produce almost every species of fruit or grain of whatever climate upon the globe. And as he watches the brooks and springs of water, and the singular variety of surface, orchards, glens, bold mountains, fertile flowery plains, picturesque sites such as those of Jerusalem, Hebron, Samaria, and a multitude of other places, he cannot but perceive how, in its palmy days, when the heights were crowned with foliage, the hill-sides with cattle, and the fields with grain, Palestine must have been indeed a goodly land, presenting to its children home attractions and inextinguishable recollections beyond even those of Scotland, Switzerland, or New England. *Bartlett.*

Beneath the apparent monotony, there is a variety in the Holy Land really remarkable. There is the variety due to the difference of level between the different parts of the country. There is the variety of climate and of natural appearances, partly from the proximity of the snow-capped Hermon and Lebanon on the north and of the torrid desert on the south. There is also the variety inevitably produced by the presence of the sea—"the eternal freshness and liveliness of ocean." Each of these is continually reflected in the Hebrew literature. The contrast between the highlands and lowlands appears in "going up" to Judah, Jerusalem, Hebron; "going down" to Jericho, Capernaum, Lydda, Cesarea, Gaza, and Egypt. The differences in climate are no less often mentioned. The Psalmists, Prophets, and historical Books, are full of allusions to the fierce heat of the mid-day sun and the dryness of summer; no less than to the various accompaniments of winter—the rain, snow, frost, ice, and fogs of Jerusalem and the upper country. Even the sharp alternations between the heat of the days and the coldness of

the nights, which strike every traveller in Palestine, are mentioned. *Dic. B.*

ADAPTATION OF THE LAND FOR ITS DIVINE PURPOSE AND USE.

The purpose which the Israelites were designed to subserve required that they should be kept in a state of isolation until they attained a power which should operate as a leavening principle on the mass of mankind. The boundaries and natural defences of Palestine are in this respect particularly noticeable. These cut it off in a manner from all the earth, and rendered it a grand and unassailable fortress in the midst of the surrounding nations. Between the Israelitish community and the great empires of the East two obstacles were interposed: the desert, which protected the outposts of the little Hebrew state, while a second line of defence was provided in the vast Jordanic fissure. On the south, as a barrier between them and Egypt, stretched the "great and terrible wilderness." The west was only accessible by sea, and at the time of the Israelites' first settlement in Palestine, the Mediterranean or great sea was not yet the thoroughfare; it was rather the limit of the eastern nations, and on the north rose the mighty ranges of Lebanon. Further, the limited area of the land, taken in connection with its great fertility and its central situation, greatly contributed to the object for which it had been selected. *D. M.*

In itself and in its relation to other countries, the country which the Lord had chosen as a nursery for his kingdom was, from *its soil and position*, better adapted for this purpose than any other on the face of the globe. The covenant-people was in the organism of mankind to be the heart of the nations. The land of Israel must have been suitable for the purposes which that nation was to serve. If Israel was to unite in itself the two requisites of greatest seclusion from all other nations and yet of occupying the most central position among them, the country in which these purposes were to be realized must have corresponded to them. And in point of fact Palestine united in itself, in an unparalleled and wonderful manner, the apparently opposed characteristics of being secluded from, and yet central to, all other countries. In truth, whether viewed *geographically, politically, or commercially*, Palestine is the "umbilicus terrarum" of the ancient world. Lying right in the middle of the three then known parts of the world, it may in some respects be regarded as belonging to all the three. From this central position Palestine

became also the central point of all *political movements and of the commerce of the world*. All the routes, both by water and by land, which connected the three parts of the ancient world, passed through Palestine. On the other hand, it will readily be perceived that the Holy Land was also almost as secluded as an island. South and east inhospitable deserts, to the west the sea, shut it off from other lands, while Lebanon on the north bounds it by an almost insurmountable wall, stretching from the sea to the eastern desert. This characteristic of seclusion appears even more distinctly and prominently when we bear in mind that (as is abundantly evident) the highlands west of Jordan were the central portion of the country, assigned to the covenant-people, where it was intended that all the principal events in its history should, and where they actually did, take place. The district in question rises like a mighty, lofty, and impregnable rocky fortress, from the wilderness of the south, from the sea-shore in the west, and from the deep valley in the east. These high mountains, with their steep rocky sides, their chasms, caverns, and defiles; these high plains, with their numberless hills, and deep valleys, could not but impede equally the destructive progress of conquering armies and the corrupting influence of foreign *spiritual* elements. On the other hand—despite the numerous population which inhabited these valleys, and the continual intercourse and interchange all around—the peculiarities of the country would also offer special advantages for the quiet, undisturbed, organic development of all the powers and faculties inherent in, or bestowed upon, the peculiar and independent culture of its inhabitants, both in its social, moral, and religious aspects. Like the people, the land of Israel may be compared to a vineyard well fenced in, watched over, and planted (Is. 5 : 1), where everything had been done that could be done. *Kurtz*.

The *separation from other peoples* commanded in the law (see specially Lev. 20 : 24, 26) was made easier by the secluded position of the land, which was enclosed on the south and west by great wildernesses, on the north by the high mountains of Lebanon, and which even on the west was unfavorably situated for maritime intercourse, since the coast has few landing-places or inlets. On the other hand, by the situation of the land *in the midst of the cultivated nations* which figure in ancient history (comp. Ezek. 5 : 5 ; 38 : 12), as well as by means of the great highways of the old world which led past its borders, the future theocratic calling of the people was made possible. O.—This union of

the greatest contrasts in respect to local position, viz., the utmost isolation and retirement, combined with everything to favor wide connections on all sides with the chief civilized regions of the old world by commercial intercourse and language, by sea as well as by land, with the Arabians, Indians, Egyptians, Syrians, Armenians, and with the Greek and Roman world of culture, in their common centre, local and historical, is a characteristic peculiarity of this promised land which was destined from the beginning to be the home of the chosen people. *Ritter*.—A first consequence of the position of Israel in the midst of the nations was, that it courted the powers of the world and was chastised by all, so that all became instruments of judgment on Israel. But on the other side, it was this central position which made this land fit for the starting-point of the religion of the world. O.

The land of Canaan occupied a place in the ancient world that entirely corresponded with the calling of such a people. In its immediate vicinity lay both the most densely peopled countries and the greater and more influential states of antiquity,—on the south, Egypt, and on the north and east, Assyria and Babylon, the Medes and the Persians. Still closer were the maritime states of Tyre and Sidon, whose vessels frequented every harbor then known to navigation, and whose colonies were planted in each of the three continents of the old world. And the great routes of inland commerce between the civilized nations of Asia and Africa lay either through a portion of the territory itself, or within a short distance of its borders. Yet, bounded as it was on the west by the Mediterranean, on the south by the desert, on the east by the valley of the Jordan with its two seas of Tiberias and Sodom, and on the north by the towering heights of Lebanon, the people who inhabited it might justly be said to dwell alone, while they had on every side points of contact with the most influential and distant nations. Then the land itself, in its rich soil and plentiful resources, its varieties of hill and dale, of river and mountain, its connection with the sea on one side and with the desert on another, rendered it a kind of epitome of the natural world, and fitted it peculiarly for being the home of those who were to be a pattern people to the nations of the earth. Altogether, it were impossible to conceive a region more wisely selected and in itself more thoroughly adapted for the purposes on account of which the family of Abraham were to be set apart. If they were faithful to their covenant engagements, they

might there have exhibited, as on an elevated platform, before the world the bright exemplar of a people possessing the characteristics and enjoying the advantages of a seed of blessing. And the finest opportunities were at the same time placed within their reach of proving in the highest sense benefactors to mankind, and extending far and wide the interest of truth and righteousness. Possessing the elements of the world's blessing, they were placed where these elements might tell most readily and powerfully on the world's inhabitants ; and the present possession of such a region was at once an earnest of the whole inheritance, and, as the world then stood, an effectual step toward its realization. *Fairbairn.*

Palestine was from the beginning an isolated country, and was intended so to be just as Israel was ordained to be a peculiar people ; and thus it happened that, for thousands of years, both remained unintelligible as well as inaccessible to other lands and nations. The position which Palestine held with reference to the world at large became apparent, in its historical individuality, at an early period. Though surrounded on all sides by the capitals of the most flourishing and civilized nations, yet the country with its temple-city was little affected by the active operations of its neighbors ; deserts and seas rendering it of difficult access in those times, and the rocks, ravines, and hills that guarded its frontiers, proving a competent barrier against such small temptations as a district but moderately adorned by nature, and poor withal, could hold out to foreigners. Thus, by perseveringly cultivating its poor soil, which, however, amply remunerated the labor bestowed on it, and by always falling back on its own patriarchal centre, there being no navigable rivers leading to the sea, nor other channels encouraging external commerce, the people of Israel were enabled to complete their internal development independently, and thus to arrive at a high degree of compactness. This it was competent to perform through what nature had portioned out to it—an insulated position on the globe ; this it was destined to perform, by reason of its having kept itself undefiled by the heathen rites and idolatry of its immediate neighbors (of those tribes that were severally less powerful than the people of Israel, and that had not yet been incorporated with the great monarchies), from the time of Abraham, during fifteen hundred years at the least, until Palestine had gone through the part it had to act as the home of one people, until it had fulfilled its prescribed mission exactly on that spot of our planet that was now to

take its rank as the spiritual home of all the nations on earth. *Ritter.*

In the conformation of the Jewish hills, the secret of the immense vitality of the Jewish nationality is probably to be found. Had the capital of Judea been placed at Cæsarea, on the high road from Greece to Egypt—had it even been permanently fixed at Shechem, accessible through the open valley of Samaria, it cannot be doubted that Greek or Egyptian influence would have affected far more the manners and religion of the Jews. Remote and inaccessible in its rugged mountains, Jerusalem was removed from the highway by which the hosts of the Pharaohs advanced on Assyria. It was only accessible by one of three difficult passes, unless the whole country of Samaria were in the hands of the enemy. Hence, in the mountains of Judea, the national faith had a secure home. The Philistines overran the plains, and even came up into the Shephelah ; Egyptian and Assyrian monarchs conquered Samaria and Galilee ; but a small band of undisciplined peasants was able, under the Maccabees, to hold at bay the armies of the Seleucidæ, and it required the fullest efforts of Roman energy and discipline to compass the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus or under Hadrian. The history again repeats itself in Crusading times. The Judean hills resisted long after all other parts of the country had been lost, and Saladin held Jerusalem undisturbed while Richard overran the plains. *Conder.*

Witness of the Land to the Sacred History.

The geographical details of the Book of Joshua admit of being brought to the test of comparison with the ascertained condition of the country ; and the result is that their accuracy has been fully established in the minutest particulars. The entire political and religious life of the Hebrews was interwoven in the closest manner with the geography of the land ; and hence the opportunity to verify the alleged or implied connection between places and events is the more perfect, and affords results the more satisfactory. By this new species of testimony, the authenticity of Old Testament historical books finds an additional vindication ; and their fidelity in all matters within the sphere of geography places a new argument in the hands of the defenders of Revelation. *Ritter.*

The reality of the Hebrew history and of God's supernatural revelation stand or fall together. Anything that throws light on the reality of the history throws light at the same time on the reality of the supernatural manifestation. If the

great historical results were as they are stated to have been, there must have been a supernatural element in the history, for otherwise the results are unaccountable and impossible. And as one but not the only means of establishing the reality of the facts, we may appeal to the *witness of the land*. Particularly, in the history of the campaigns of Joshua, when the country was subdued and divided, we may trace a remarkable coincidence between the facts as they are recorded and the actual physical condition of the country—a coincidence the more remarkable that it must have been unknown to the writers of the history, the science of physical geography by which it is brought to light being quite modern. In many other facts of the history, occurring at subsequent times, both in the Old Testament and the New, a similar coincidence may be found between the history and the land. And finally, in the present condition of the land, we find its testimony to the truth of the *prophetic* record, which not only foretold that the Israelites would be driven from it, but also that it would be kept in a condition of semi-desolation, as if waiting for their return. W. G. B.

THE TRIBES OF CANAAN BEFORE THE CONQUEST.

The narrow strip of country which extends from the mountain-peaks of Lebanon to the Egyptian desert, with the sea on the one side and the Jordan on the other, has been known under the various names of Canaan, of Palestine, and of the Holy Land. It is a land of hill and plain; but the hills, bare and rocky for the most part, much exceed the plains on which they look. The farther north we go, the more mountainous does the country become, rising finally into the lofty mass of Hermon, and the ranges of Lebanon and Antilibanus. Fertile plains and valleys are cut off from one another by intervening ridges, while wild cliffs and almost trackless ravines offer shelter to brigands or fugitives.

The very nature of the country, therefore, fitted it to be the home of many different and independent tribes. When the Israelites, under Joshua, first entered the Promised Land, they found it in the possession of a variety of races, in various stages of culture and civilization, and often engaged in war with each other. In the plains were the cities of the dissolute and effeminate Canaanites, on the sea-coast lived wealthy communities of merchants and sailors, while the mountain fastnesses were held by warlike clans whose ruined strongholds were the *Ai's*, or "stone heaps" of later times. The population was broadly distinguished into *Canaanites*, the inhabitants of the Canaan, or "low-

lands," and *Amorites*, or "Highlanders." Canaan was originally the name of the coast on which the great trading cities of the Phœnicians stood; but long before the time of the Israelitish invasion the name had been extended to denote the dwellers in the plain wherever they might be. Indeed, passages like Ju. 1 : 9 show that it had been extended even farther, and had come to signify tribes which were properly Amorites. Hence it is that the language, spoken alike by the Hebrews and the older inhabitants of the country, is called "the language of Canaan" (Is. 20 : 18). The same wide extension that had been given to the name of Canaanite was given also to that of Amorite. But the Amorites, of whom we chiefly hear in the Bible, lived in the south, at Hebron and Jerusalem (Josh. 10 : 5, 6); at Shechem (2 S. 21 : 2), and even in Bashan on the eastern side of the Jordan (De. 3 : 8). It is probable that the Amorites of the Egyptian monuments were those to whom the name was first applied, and that it accompanied the twin-name of Canaanite when the latter was carried beyond the boundaries of its original territory.

Side by side with the names of Canaanite and Amorite were two other names, which similarly had a descriptive rather than a national signification. These were *Perizzite*, or "peasant," and *Hivite*, or "villager." The Perizzite was the agriculturist, or *fellah*, as opposed to the citizen of the town, and was accordingly found both in Ephraim and in Judah (Josh. 11 : 3 ; 17 : 15 ; Ju. 1 : 4, 5), like the Hivite, who is placed in the north (Josh. 11 : 3 ; Ju. 3 : 3 ; 2 S. 24 : 7), as well as in Gibeon (Josh. 9 : 7 ; 11 : 19), and at Shechem (Gen. 34 : 2). *Hivite* was another descriptive term of the same kind; it denoted the troglodytes, the inhabitants of the caves, with which the cliffs of Mount Seir were pierced, Equally descriptive, though in a different way, was the name of the *Rephaim*, or "giants." They represented the earlier inhabitants of the land whom the Canaanites of the Old Testament found already occupying it, before their own arrival. To what race they belonged, or what languages they spoke, we have no means of determining. The names of a few only of their tribes have been preserved to us. In the neighborhood of the Dead Sea they were known as *Zuzim* (Gen. 14 : 5); perhaps the same name as *Zamzummim* (De. 2 : 20). In Moab the *Emim* preceded the Moabites (De. 2 : 11); while in the hill country of Judah the *Anakim*, with whom the Egyptian monuments are also acquainted, survived to the period of the Israelitish invasion, and, farther south, the country, in which

the five cities of the Philistines stood, had been wrested from the *Avim* (De. 2 : 23).

The Egyptian monuments have thrown much light upon the origin of the *Philistine* colonists. They came, as we learn from the Bible, from Caphtor (Amos 9 : 7 ; Jer. 47 : 4 ; De. 2 : 23 ; the clause in Gen. 10 : 14 is misplaced). Now Caphtor is the Egyptian Keft-ur or "greater Phœnicia," a name given to the coast-land of the Delta in consequence of the number of Phœnicians settled there at an early date. Some of these were planted on the southern frontier of Palestine by the Egyptian kings after their conquest of Canaan, in order to garrison the newly acquired territory, and became the Philistines of later history. Their five cities were originally the garrison towns of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

Their neighbors, in the age of the patriarchs, were *Hittites*, who, in Gen. 23, appear in possession of Hebron. They seem to have taken it from the Anakim, who, however, must subsequently have recovered the city which had been founded by their forefather, Arba (Josh. 15 : 13). But the south of Canaan was not the proper home of the sons of Heth, and their presence there can only be explained by supposing that Hittite clans had formed part of the great Hyksos army which invaded and held Egypt in bondage for five hundred years, and that some of them had remained behind in what was afterward the territory of Judah. According to the Egyptian historian Manetho, Jerusalem was founded by Hyksos fugitives, and Zoan or Tanis, the Hyksos capital, was built seven years after Hebron (Nu. 13 : 22). Manetho's statement is confirmed by Ezekiel, who says that the father of Jerusalem was an Amorite, and the mother a Hittite (Ezek. 16 : 3). The Hittites were a literary people, as we learn both from the Egyptian inscriptions and from their own recently discovered monuments ; and it is therefore worth noticing that the earlier name of Debir, near Hebron, was Kirjath-sepher, or "Book-town" (Ju. 1 : 11). Debir itself signifies "the shrine," and points to the existence of some famous temple there.

The *Phœnicians* traced their origin to the "Assyrian Lake," or Persian Gulf. It was here that the Semites learned the elements of culture from their more civilized neighbors, the primitive inhabitants of Chaldea, and from hence band after band of emigrants started for the regions of the west. The first to arrive on the shores of the Mediterranean were the builders of Tyre and Sidon, of Gebal and Arvad, whom later history knew under the name of Phœni-

cians. Sidon, "the fishers' town," was the first of their settlements. Here they built their boats, and ventured into the waters of the sea in search of the murex, or purple-fish. The "fishers' town" grew in time into a city of merchant princes, whose trade was rivalled by that of Tyre, "the Rock," founded a little to the south on a rocky island two miles distant from the shore. The most prosperous and advanced of all the populations whom the Israelites found in Palestine were the Phœnicians on the coast. Their cities—Tyre, Sidon, Zarephath or Sarepta, Berytos, now Beyrût, Gebal or Byblos, Arvad, and Zemar (Gen. 10 : 18), or Simyra—were governed sometimes by kings, sometimes by "judges." They had established colonies in Cyprus, and their merchantmen, the "ships of Tarshish," as they are called in the Old Testament, made long voyages in the Mediterranean as far as Tarshish or Tartessus, and Cadiz in Spain, or started from Ezion-geber, in the Gulf of Akabah, for the southern coast of Arabia and Ophir, at the mouths of the Indus. But the tract of country they inhabited in Canaan was a mere strip, shut in by the lofty peaks of Lebanon, and the territories of the Gergashites. They were therefore obliged to get rid of their surplus population by emigration ; and first the islands and shores of Greece, then Utica, Carthage, and other places in Northern Africa, were planted with colonists. But, whether at home or abroad, the Phœnicians, the original Canaanites, were industrious traders and artisans ; art and literature flourished among them at an early date, and the alphabet we still use is ultimately derived from that which they first borrowed from the Egyptians and then improved. Their religion was a sensuous nature-worship, at once cruel and licentious. The Sun-god under various forms was the chief object of their cult. His general title was Baal, "Lord," and each city and state had its own special Baal. Altars to the Sun-god were raised on the summits of the mountains, where the worshipper seemed to approach nearest to the sky, and in each of these "high places" the deity was adored under a new name derived from the locality in which his altar stood. But the Phœnicians formed but a small portion of the advancing wave of Semitic immigration. Other Semitic tribes, claiming the same ancestry, worshipping the same gods, speaking the same language, and therefore included in the Old Testament under the common name of Canaanites, overran the country to the east and south, and succeeded in establishing themselves on the plains and coasts, if not in the more mountainous parts. Some-

times they exterminated the older population, sometimes they intermarried with it. They devoted themselves to trade and agriculture, and the arts of life sprang up among them. But in the train of culture came vices and idolatries which brought upon them the curse of God. The instrument of their punishment was made the Hebrew tribes, who had been the last of the Semitic family to leave their old home on the banks of the Euphrates, and who, after a sojourn in Egypt, were led by Joshua to take possession of "the Promised Land." Stronghold after stronghold of the Canaanites fell before the invaders, who attempted to extirpate, so far as they could, both the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine and the subsequent Semitic settlers. The extirpation, however, was far from complete; and to this day the peasantry of the Holy Land are in physical type and character the descendants of those whom Joshua was commissioned to destroy. *Sayce.*

The Canaanites in Abraham's time seem to have been rather a collection of village communities, who recognized the supremacy of the Hittite invaders. The country was not lawless. It was the highway of the great commercial route or caravan road between the empires of Chaldea and Egypt, and the few allusions in Scripture point to industrious and peaceful communities. Such certainly were Shechem and Hebron. Recent research has cast a flood of light on the movements of the Hittites who then ruled at Hebron; and we know from Egyptian records that, not long before the time of Abraham, they had pushed from northern Syria, halted for some little time at Hebron, and then moved on to Egypt, where they established for some generations the dynasty of the Hyksos or shepherd kings. Hence the significance of that passing remark in Nu. 13 : 22 : "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." Zoan was the capital of the Hyksos dynasty, and the Hittites had paused seven years at Hebron before making their farther advance.

Very different was the state of Canaan four hundred and fifty years later, when conquered by Joshua. The whole country was studded with walled towns. Places which, like Bethel, had been but a name in the days of Abraham, were now considerable cities. Scripture gives but one incidental hint of the changes which had occurred meanwhile. Hebron and Kirjathsepher, which had been Hittite in the time of the patriarchs, were now Amorite, and the name of the latter changed to Debir; while in Joshua's time the Hittites were found in the mountains. The Egyptian annals explain this. A century

before the Exodus, the Shepherd, or Hyksos, dynasty having been overthrown, Thothmes III., and after him Rameses II., prosecuted great campaigns against the Hittites, invading Canaan and Syria, driving their hereditary foes out of Hebron, and overrunning the country as far as the Euphrates, but making no permanent conquests.

The period before Thothmes was the epoch of Canaanite development; for we find, in the Egyptian records, a list of over a hundred places submitting, given in the same topographical order in which the names occur in the Book of Joshua. With the exception of a few strongholds, and some remote and inaccessible districts, the Israelites occupied the walled towns and the villages built by the Canaanites. *Tristram.*

THE EARTHLY TYPICAL OF THE HEAVENLY CANAAN.

1. The earthly Canaan was neither designed by God, nor from the first was it understood by His people to be the ultimate and proper inheritance which they were to occupy; things having been spoken and hoped for concerning it which plainly could not be realized within the bounds of Canaan.

2. The inheritance was one which could be enjoyed only by those who had become the children of the resurrection, themselves fully redeemed in soul and body from all the effects and consequences of sin,—made more glorious and blessed, indeed, than if they had never sinned, because constituted after the image of the heavenly Adam. And as the inheritance must correspond with the inheritor, it can only be man's original possession restored,—the earth redeemed from the curse which sin brought on it, and, like man himself, rendered exceedingly more beautiful and glorious than in its primeval state,—the fit abode of a Church made like, in all its members, to the Son of God.

3. The occupation of the earthly Canaan by the natural seed of Abraham was a type, and no more than a type, of this occupation by a redeemed Church of her destined inheritance of glory; and consequently everything concerning the entrance of the former on their temporary possession was ordered so as to represent and foreshadow the things which belong to the Church's establishment in her permanent possession. Hence, between the giving of the promise which, though it did not terminate in the land of Canaan, yet included that, and though it prospectively exhibited the better in-

heritance, a series of important events intervened, which are capable of being fully and properly explained in no other way than by means of their typical bearing on the things hereafter to be disclosed respecting that better inheritance. If we ask, why did the heirs of promise wander about so long as pilgrims, and withdraw to a foreign region before they were allowed to possess the land, and not rather, like a modern colony, quietly spread, without strife or bloodshed, over its surface, till the whole was possessed? Or, why were they suffered to fall under the dominion of a foreign power, from whose cruel oppression they needed to be redeemed, with terrible executions of judgment on the oppressor, before the possession could be theirs? Or why, before that event also, should they have been put under the discipline of law, having the covenant of Sinai, with its strict requirements and manifold obligations of service, superadded to the covenant of grace and promise? Or why, again, should their right to the inheritance itself have to be vindicated from a race of occupants who had been

allowed for a time to keep possession of it, and whose multiplied abominations had so polluted it, that nothing short of their extermination could render it a fitting abode for the heirs of promise? The full and satisfactory answer to all such questions can only be given by viewing the whole in connection with the better things of a higher dispensation,—as the first part of a plan which was to have its counterpart and issue in the glories of a redeemed creation, and for the final results of which the Church needed to be prepared by standing in similar relations, and passing through like experiences, in regard to an earthly inheritance. No doubt, with one and all of these there were connected reasons and results for the time then present, amply sufficient to justify every step in the process, when considered simply by itself. But it is only when we take the whole as a glass, in which to see mirrored the far greater things which from the first were in prospect, that we can get a comprehensive view of the mind of God in appointing them, and know the purposes which He chiefly contemplated. *Fairbairn.*

Section 215.

INHERITANCE OF TWO AND A HALF TRIBES UNDER MOSES. DISTRIBUTION BY LOT TO THE NINE AND A HALF TRIBES. SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE AT SHILOH. REMAINING LAND DIVIDED INTO SEVEN PORTIONS AND ASSIGNED TO SEVEN TRIBES BY THE LOT.

JOSHUA 13 : 1-33 ; 14 : 1-5 ; 15 : 1-12, 20-63 ; 16 : 1-10 ; 17 : 1-18 ; 18 : 1-28 ; 19 : 1-49, 51.

13 1 Now Joshua was old and well stricken in years ; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and well stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.
 2 This is the land that yet remaineth : all the regions of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites ;
 3 from the Shihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the border of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanites : the five lords of the Philistines ; the Gazites, and the Ashdodites,
 4 the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites ; also the Avvim, on the south : all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongeth to the Zidonians, unto Aphek, to the border of
 5 the Amorites : and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from
 6 Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath : all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, even all the Zidonians ; them will I drive out from before the children of Israel : only allot thou it unto Israel for an inheritance, as I have
 7 commanded thee. Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

14 1 And these are the inheritances which the children of Israel took in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the
 2 tribes of the children of Israel, distributed unto them, by the lot of their inheritance, as the
 3 Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe. For Moses
 4 had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half tribe beyond Jordan : but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. For the children of Joseph were two tribes,

Manasseh and Ephraim : and they gave no portion unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for their cattle and for their substance. As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

15 : 1-12, 20-63. The inheritance of Judah.

16 : 1-10 ; 17 : 1-11. The inheritance of Ephraim and Manasseh.

17 12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants* of those cities ; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to taskwork, and did not utterly drive them out. And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one part for an inheritance, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as hitherto the LORD hath blessed me ? And Joshua said unto them, If thou be a great people, get thee up to the forest, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim ; since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for thee. And the children of Joseph said, The hill country is not enough for us : and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are in Bethshean and her towns, and they who are in the valley of Jezreel. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power : thou shalt not have one lot only : but the hill country shall be thine ; for though it is a forest, thou shalt cut it down, and the goings out thereof shall be thine : for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they be strong.

18 1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there : and the land was subdued before them. And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet divided their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land, which the LORD, the God of your fathers, hath given you ? Appoint for you three men for each tribe : and I will send them, and they shall arise, and walk through the land, and describe it according to their inheritance ; and they shall come unto me. And they shall divide it into seven portions : Judah shall abide in his border on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their border on the north. And ye shall describe the land into seven portions, and bring *the description* hither to me : and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. For the Levites have no portion among you ; for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance : and Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them. And the men arose, and went : and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh. And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven portions in a book, and they came to Joshua unto the camp at Shiloh. And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD : and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

18 : 11-28 ; 19 : 1-48. Inheritances of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

49 So they made an end of distributing the land for inheritance by the borders thereof ;

51 These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tent of meeting. So they made an end of dividing the land.

The conquest of Canaan by Joshua was sufficiently complete to permit the distribution of the territory among the tribes of Israel, and its general occupation accordingly. The assignment to each tribe of its portion of the territory was made, as a rule, by lot ; and it is remarkable how well the condition of the several tribes, in its district thus assigned, answered to the condition predicted of it, many years before, by the dying Moses, and even to the condition predict-

ed of it hundreds of years before in Egypt by the dying Jacob. N. C. B.—The Book of Joshua is the Domesday Book of Palestine, not only describing, with the fulness of a government survey, the various tribal boundaries throughout the land, but containing long lists of the towns and villages allotted to each tribe, in the order, as recent research has shown, of their geographical position. *Porter.*

The conquest of Palestine, *so far as it required*

the united forces of all Israel, was over ; what remained to be done, in putting down risings, in consolidating what had been won, and in capturing isolated and still unconquered cities, was left for the most part to the energy of the tribe to which the territory in question was assigned. The warlike half of Joshua's great task was accomplished : the peaceful work of dividing the territory between the victorious tribes remained. The second half of the Book of Joshua—chapters 13-22—the Domesday Book of Palestine, is mainly taken up with details of the distribution. These are no less honorable to the man who carried them out than the details of the campaign which rendered them possible. *Plummer.*

13 : 1. Now Joshua was old. To what age he was now advanced we cannot certainly know, because we do not know his age when he came out of Egypt. If he was then forty-three, he was eighty-three when they came into Canaan ; and now he wanted not much of a hundred. *Patrick.*

3. When the Israelites arrived, the Philistines were in full possession of the *Shephelah*, or maritime plain, from the "river of Egypt" in the south to Ekron in the north, and had formed a confederacy of five powerful cities—Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The interval that elapsed between Abraham and the Exodus seems sufficient to allow for the alteration that took place in the position of the Philistines, and their transformation from a pastoral tribe to a settled and powerful nation. *P. S.*

5. The notices in the Bible lead us to search for Baal-gad in the direction and neighborhood of *Baalbek*. In the valley of Lebanon, under Hermon, and the entrance into Hamath : these are the geographical indications. Let any one ride from Baalbek northward to Lebweh or 'Ain, or, better still, to Kamûa Hermel, and look off toward Hamath, and he will be struck with the propriety of the phrase, entrance into Hamath. From his standpoint the valley of the Bûk'ah opens out like a vast fan on to the great plain of northern Syria, and he is at the gate of the kingdom. Baalbek being, therefore, in the neighborhood where we must look for Baal gad, there seems to be no good reason to doubt their identity, for there is no rival to dispute the honor of the name and site. The remains at Baalbek are adequate to meet the demands of any history, and some of them may claim an antiquity equal to anything that even Egypt can boast. *Thompson.*

6. It should be always remembered that the promise made by God, of driving out the old inhabitants ("Them will I drive out," verse 6),

was conditional, and depended on the adherence of the Israelites to his worship and service. Accordingly, in consequence of their flagrant and repeated disobedience, they only partially deserved the fulfilment of the promise. We do not read that the Sidonians (verse 6) were ever conquered by the Israelites, and the people of Lebanon were not made tributary till the days of David and Solomon. *Patrick.*—Joshua actually *did* all that it was promised he *should* do. God never said that he should *conquer* all the land, but simply that he should *bring* Israel *into* it, and divide it among them, both which he did, and procured them footing by his conquests sufficient to have enabled them to establish themselves in it forever. Their failure to do so was owing wholly to themselves.

7. Dividing the land by lot was the readiest way of satisfying all parties, and preventing discontent and discord. The several allotments are here very minutely detailed in order that litigation growing out of disputed boundaries might ever after be prevented. When the limits of each tribe were so clearly settled there could be little room for contending claims ; or if there were, an authentic register of the lot of each tribe would be at hand to be appealed to for a decision, and there is no doubt that it was often made use of in after ages for this purpose. The reading of this account by succeeding generations would tend to excite a deep impression of the goodness of God in bestowing upon their ancestors for the benefit of their posterity, such a large and fertile country, an inheritance so replete with all worldly blessings. *Bush.*

THE COUNTRY EAST OF JORDAN, AS DIVIDED BY MOSES AMONG REUBEN, GAD, AND HALF-MANASSEH.

Ch. 13 : 8-33.

8-13. These verses comprise a general description of the *whole country* east of Jordan given to the two tribes and a half. The remainder of the chapter is occupied with a detailed account of the *several districts allotted to each.* *Bush.*

THE INHERITANCE OF THE NINE TRIBES AND A HALF.

Chs. 14-19.

14 : 1-5. These verses comprise a general introduction to the six chapters.

The division of the land among the nine and a half tribes was, in strict accordance with Divine direction (Nu. 26 : 52-56 ; 33 : 54 ; 34 : 2-29), made by Eleazar, Joshua, and one representative from each of the ten tribes. It was de-

cided by the "lot," which probably, however, only determined the *situation* of each inheritance, whether north or south, inland or by the sea-shore, not its *extent* and precise boundaries. These would depend upon the size of each tribe. In point of fact, the original arrangements had in some cases to be afterward modified, not as to tribal localization which was unalterably fixed by the Divine lot, but as to extent of territory. Thus Judah had to give up part of its possession to Simeon (19 : 9), while Dan, whose portion proved too small, obtained certain cities both from Judah and from Ephraim. A. E.

2. The *sacred lot* was employed at the division of the tribal territories, to discover the guilty one who had brought a curse on the people (Josh. 7), and in 1 S. 10 : 20 f., at the king's election. These methods of inquiring into the Divine will retire into the background the more *prophecy* becomes prominent. O.—This distribution by lot was overruled by a special providence, so as to correspond with the inspired predictions of Jacob and Moses respecting the allotment of each tribe. The fact is unquestionable, that the tribes found themselves placed *by lot* in the very sections of the country which Jacob had foretold two hundred and fifty years before, and Moses shortly before his death (comp. Gen. 49 and De. 33). To Judah fell a country abounding in *vineyards* and *pastures*; to Zebulun, *sea-coasts*; to Issachar, a *rich plain between ranges of mountains*; to Asher, one abounding in plenty of *oil, wheat, and metals*; and so of the others. Bush.

Chs. 15-17. Judah and Joseph, as the two great tribes, dividing the birthright between them, had the land first divided between them, their general outlines being given. Afterward the other tribes are arranged, modifying the first division. The lot probably gave only *general* indications, while the commissioners made the special allotments, according to circumstances. Crosby.

JUDAH'S ALLOTTED INHERITANCE.

15 : 1-12, 20-63.

The tribe of Judah was powerful in consequence of its numbers, and now received such natural frontiers as to form, on the south, a rampart of protection to the whole of Israel against the enemy. Therefore its boundaries went from the south end of the Salt Sea westward to where Sihor empties itself into the Mediterranean; its eastern limits, from the south end of the Salt Sea to the point where it receives the waters of the Jordan; its northern,

from thence over Mount Zion, by Timnah and the brook Sorek, to the sea which bounds it on the west. C. G. B.—The lot of Judah as here marked out was bounded on the south by the wilderness of Sin and the southern coast of the Salt Sea; on the east by that sea, reaching to the place at which it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the north by a line drawn nearly parallel to Jerusalem across from the northern extremity of the Salt Sea to the south boundary of the Philistines and to the Mediterranean Sea; which sea was its western boundary as far as the river of Egypt. Joshua is particular in giving the limits of this tribe, as being the first, the most numerous, the most important, that which was to furnish the *kings* of Judea, that in which *pure religion* was to be preserved, and that from which the Messiah was to spring. As this portion, however, contained nearly half the southern part of Canaan, it was afterward found too extensive, and the possessions of Simeon and Dan were taken out of it. Bush.—In traveling over these places one begins early to perceive that not only is the geography and scenery of Palestine "a fifth gospel," but it is a second Pentateuch, Book of Joshua, and Kings. The feeling deepened at every step of the journey. S. C. B.

20. This is the preface to the list of principal towns of Judah, which follow in four sections: those in the *Negeb* (the technical "South" of Judah); those in the *Shephelah* (the fertile plain on the coast); those in the *Mountain* country, and those in the *Wilderness* west of the Dead Sea. Crosby.

Natural or Physical Characteristics of Judah's Inheritance.

First, the Negeb or "South" country extends along the whole southern frontier from east to west. It is an irregularly shaped tract, extending from the mountains of Judah on the north to the edge of the Desert of Paran, and from the south end of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean; but stretching in a sloping direction toward the northeast to the Dead Sea, and to the southwest to El Arish, thus occupying a middle position, both topographically and physically, between the rich soil of central Canaan and the sandy wastes of that great and terrible wilderness. The *south* differs from the hill country of Judah to the north of it, not merely so much in being pastoral instead of cultivated, for its whole extent yields proof of very extensive though not universal cultivation in former times; nor in its being less hilly, for it has but few plains of any extent; but in its deep ravines, torn and rent

by winter torrents, "the streams of the south" of Ps 126 : 4. These torrents, quite dry in summer, cut down steep cliffs into narrow gullies by their violence in winter. On the west side they drain toward the Arish and Philistia, on the east toward the Dead Sea, none running south into Paran or the Wilderness. The wide central expanse is now a sort of upland wilderness, a series of rolling hills, with scanty herbage more abundant on their northern slopes, but without a tree or a bush more than three feet high. The words of Dr. Robinson, about Zephath or Hormah, may be applied to every city of the Negeb : —"Once, as we judged upon the spot, this must have been a city of not less than 10,000 or 12,000 inhabitants. Now it is a perfect field of ruins, a scene of unutterable desolation, across which the passing stranger can with difficulty find his way." A mighty spell seems to rest upon the cities of the south. We turn to the word of prophecy, and we read, "The cities of the south (Negeb) shall be shut up, and none shall open them : Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it : it shall be wholly carried away captive" (Jer. 13 : 19).

The second physical division of the allotment of Joshua was the *Shephelah*, or low country, translated generally in our version as "the valley" (Josh. 15 : 33), and sometimes "the plain." It comprises the low lying flat country, whether desert or corn-growing, which intervenes between the central backbone of hills extending from north to south and the sea. The expression, though equally applicable to all the coast plains of Palestine, is generally confined to those of Philistia and Sharon, which are limited northward by the bold projecting spur of Carmel ; while the next plain, that of Acre, is similarly cut off by the precipitous Ladder of Tyre from the Plain of Phœnicia. This region in the allotment of the tribes fell principally to Judah, in the south of whose portion were several towns assigned to Simeon ; while the northern part, better known as the Plain of Sharon, was the rich but narrow heritage of Dan. Practically, however, the more important and valuable part of this vast corn-plain was never conquered till after the monarchy, and remained in the possession of the Philistines, who were often the terror and the scourge of Israel. There is no natural boundary line between Philistia and Sharon. The plain stretches with scarce an undulation, but with very varying depth inland, from the southern frontiers of the Desert of Gaza to the foot of Carmel. The descent from the Negeb, or south land, to the low country is gentle and insensible on its southern limit, but

much more steep and clearly defined from the hill country of Judah on the east. From the low country of the coast we now turn eastward to the third physical division of the territory of Judah, recognized constantly in Holy Writ as "the mountains," or the "*Hill country*." The line of demarcation between it and "the south country" is very easily recognized, though they blend into each other. The great pasture district of the south melts into the hill country a few miles to the south of Hebron. The northern part of the "Negeb" presents the appearance of a long series of gently-rolling downs, wide shallow valleys, and broad rounded ridges. But a few hours before reaching Hebron the valleys become narrower and steeper, the hill-tops are sharper, the ridges are full of caves, natural or artificial—the dwellings of the Horites, or Cave-men, in olden times ; and when we reach Debir we can fully understand the petition of Achsah to her father Caleb : "Give me a blessing ; for thou hast given me a south land : give me also springs of water" (Ju. 1 : 15), as we see the springs gushing forth from the rocky side of the valley, and feel we are no longer in a "south land." Here the ruins of the cities of Judah begin to crowd upon us. Almost every hill-top is marked by the groups of deserted dwellings—not grass-grown, like those of the south, but with walls and narrow streets, bare and barren. Every name recalls some incident in the life of the Bethlehemite—Jattir, Lebaoth, Eshtemoa, Maon, Carmel, Ziph—scarcely altered in the Arabic vernacular from the old Hebrew. The register of Joshua (verses 21–62) gives thirty-eight cities in the hill country of Judah, divided into five topographical groups ; and even among these are omitted some of future distinction, as Bethlehem and Tekoa. But it is impossible to wander among these hills without perceiving that the expression, "her towns," applied in the enumeration to many of the cities, was no mere figure of speech. The groups of ruins, "the desolate heaps" of Judah, far outnumber any catalogue of her cities that has come down to us. There are no streams, but many springs, and wells innumerable.

The hill country culminates at Hebron, but it slopes very little either east or west, forming throughout its whole extent a rugged plateau from Philistia to the Dead Sea ; and its deep dells, or wadys, are scarcely seen till we are upon them. They run for the most part east and west from the central ridge, and add immensely to the natural strength of the district, every nook of which is almost a natural fortress, independently of the cities whose ruins crown every

brow, where once "the Lion of Judah" crouched secure. The wells are sunk in hill and vale alike; and all the hill-sides, ribbed with their parallel lines of terrace, once covered with gardens, vineyards, and fig-trees, attest the indefatigable industry no less than the dense population of its ancient inhabitants. But the position of the towns and the character of the ruins are so constantly alike, that it is in vain to attempt separate descriptions for each, save in very few instances. *Tristram*.

The *Wilderness* is the district stretching along the western shore of the Dead Sea in which David took refuge for some time when pursued by Saul; it is a dreary waste of bare hills cut up by innumerable water-courses, uncultivated, and bearing no traces of former occupation. *Wilson*.

INHERITANCE OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.

16 : 1-10 ; 17 : 1-13.

The tribe of Joseph had the centre of the land across from Jordan to the Mediterranean. Ephraim lay north of Judah; but between them were the districts afterward allotted to Benjamin and Dan. Besides the sacred valley of Shechem, it included some of the finest parts of Palestine, the mountains of Ephraim, and the great and fertile maritime plain of Sharon, proverbial for its roses. P. S.—**16 : 1-4**. The descendants of Joseph received two shares of the inheritance. As closely allied tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh received each many towns situated in the territory of the other. C. G. B.—The central hill country of Palestine is often spoken of as "*Mount Ephraim*," an expression which comprises all the hilly region from within a few miles north of Jerusalem at Bethel, as far as the Plain of Esdraelon, including, therefore, the whole of the west allotment of Manasseh. Mount Ephraim was to the northern country what the hill country of Judah was to the southern—the backbone, centre, and strength of the nation. Like the hill country of Judah, and unlike the possessions of the northern tribes by Esdraelon, or the western ones by the coast, it was inaccessible to invaders, who were not prepared for the risks of mountain defiles and the storming of hill forts. Its military topography is such, that it is defensible at every turn, and nothing but a panic could disorganize the defence of such a region. Thus the tribe of Manasseh was charged by the High Priest "to keep the passages of the hill country, for by them there was an entrance into Judea; and it was easy to stop them that would come up, because the passage was strait

for two men at the most" (Judith 4 : 7). *Tristram*.

Shechem, famous in the days of Abraham and Jacob, and which Joshua may be said to have made the civil capital of the country, was situated in the tribe of Ephraim. So was Shiloh, the first ecclesiastical capital, where the ark was solemnly placed, at the end of Joshua's wars. So also was Samaria, which became, under Omri, the capital of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Joshua himself was a man of Ephraim, and must have given no small importance to the tribe. Gideon, one of the most noble of the judges, with his seventy princely brothers, was a native of the adjacent tribe of Manasseh. "The mountain," or mountainous part, "of Ephraim," was frequently the rallying-place for the nation, where the appointed deliverers raised the standard of resistance to their oppressors. Deborah, though herself apparently of the northern tribes, dwelt between Ramah and Bethel, in Mount Ephraim; Tola of Issachar judged Israel in Shamir, in the same mount; Samuel was of Ramah. W. G. B.—Of the southern tribes, the most powerful was Judah; of the northern, Ephraim; whence originated a jealousy between the two, which broke out early, and laid the foundation of that fatal schism which took place on the death of Solomon, by the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam an Ephraimite. *Hales*.

17 : 2. In 16 : 1 the revision reads, "And the lot for the children of Joseph went out from the Jordan," etc., connecting the verb with the locality, whereas the meaning is that "the lot came out [from the urn or receptacle of the lots] for the children of Joseph," etc. So in the second verse of this seventeenth chapter the revision reads, "And the lot was for the rest of Manasseh," as if this was a new statement in addition to what preceded, whereas it is a mere resumption of what has gone before. The Appendix therefore reads, "So the lot was for the rest," etc. *Chambers*.

17 : 12. The children of Manasseh could not drive out. They could not drive them out through want of faith in God, and of zeal to perform his commands. Here the fountain of all the evils which afterward befell the Israelites begins to be opened, in that, either through sloth or covetousness or distrust of God's power, they did not attempt to drive out those people that were stronger than ordinary; or through want of faith in God, failed in the attempt. *Patrick*. — **The Canaanites would dwell in that land.** Heb. "willed to dwell." A very remarkable expres-

sion, indicative of the obstinate determination of the Canaanites to retain possession of the country, and carrying with it a severe reflection upon the supineness, cowardice, and unbelief of the Israelites. *Bush.*

13. They put the Canaanites to tribute. Herein they offended against the Divine command (De. 20 : 16, 17), by which they were peremptorily directed to destroy the Canaanites when they were able. In thus putting them to tribute, they were probably influenced by motives of indolence and gain. *Patrick.*—This early degree of sloth and worldly-mindedness, afterward displayed in other instances, laid the foundation of all the ensuing calamities which befell the people. *Pyle.*—Any conformity to the heathen around, or tolerance of heathenism, any decay of the spirit in which they had entered the land, would result not only in weakness, but in the triumph of the enemy. And so it was intended of the Lord. The lesson of all this is obvious and important. To us also has our Joshua given entrance into Canaan, and victory over our enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have *present* possession of the land. But we do not yet hold all its cities, nor are our enemies exterminated. It needs on our part constant faith ; there must be no compromise with the enemy, no tolerance of his spirit, no cessation of our warfare. Only that which at first gave us the land can complete and consolidate our possession of it. A. E.

Complaint of Ephraim and Manasseh.

17 : 14-18.

14-18. The children of Joseph, that is, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, complain to Joshua of the narrowness of their allotment, which was increased by the Canaanites still retaining so large a portion of it. Joshua, though a descendant himself of Joseph, remained perfectly impartial ; and told them they must enlarge the country by their valor, by driving out their enemies from the woody and mountainous parts, and thus making them habitable for themselves. *Pyle.*—One lot and one only should they have in the general apportionment. If they wanted more they must conquer it for themselves. They grounded their claim on being “a great people,” having “great power.” Well, then, let them prove it by great deeds. There was room enough for them in “the wood country ;” let them get them up there and clear away the forest, and drive out the Perizzites and the giants, if Mount Ephraim were too narrow for them. So they might obtain a second portion, and not have “one lot only.” E. V.

Many wish for larger possessions, who do not cultivate and make the best of what they have, think they should have more talents given them, who do not trade with those with which they are intrusted. Most people's poverty is the effect of their idleness ; would they dig, they need not beg. He bids them *fight for more* (verses 17, 18), when they pleaded that they could not come at the wood-lands he spoke of, because in the valley between them and it there were Canaanites whom they durst not enter the lists with. “Never fear them,” said Joshua, “thou hast God on thy side, and *thou shalt drive out the Canaanites* if thou wilt set about it in good earnest, *though they have iron chariots.*” We straiten ourselves by apprehending the difficulties in the way of our enlargement to be greater than they are. H.

The attitude of the children of Joseph throughout the history of the twelve tribes is in precise accordance with the hint given here. They were proud of their numerical preponderance over the remaining tribes. Thus they, and they only, ventured to remonstrate with Joshua about the inadequacy of the portion allotted to them. Such a sensitiveness was likely to degenerate into insolence when the authority of the great leader was removed. And the history of Gideon and of Jephthah shows that this was actually the case. Here, again, we have a sign of that deep undercurrent of consistency which underlies our history, and is a guarantee of its authenticity. *Lias.*

These tribes had plenty of power, plenty of stalwart men to clear the waste or conquer their enemies ; but they had not moral force to match. They want to dominate, without paying the price of lordship in daring and willingness to encounter difficulty and hardship. *Glover.*—For the Church, too, conquest is the condition of security and of continuance. Pressed on every hand by a hostile world, it must be ever in an attitude of active defence and advance. Every new generation needs to be won afresh for Jesus Christ. The Church cannot even hold its own without ever fresh conquests. *De P.*

THE TABERNACLE (“*Tent of Meeting*”) SET UP AT SHILOH.

18 : 1.

When the two great tribes of Judah and Joseph had been located, the one taking the south and the other the middle portion of the country, there seems to have been a pause in the work of distribution. We have no direct statement of the reason, nor are we told how long the interval was between the dividing of the

land to the two tribes at Gilgal and the dividing of the land to the seven tribes at Shiloh. Crosby.

18 : 1. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled at Shiloh. This was the first *assembly* or *diet* of the people, held for important consultation ; therefore the expression is not, “ *the children of Israel,*” but “ *the whole congregation of the children of Israel.*” The encampment was moved from Gilgal to Shiloh, and the tabernacle set up. C. G. B. (See maps, pp. 86, 110.)

The situation of Shiloh was central to the whole country, and probably this fact determined its selection. The able-bodied men of the nation being required three times a year to leave their homes and journey to the place of the sanctuary, for the celebration of the national religious festivals, convenience of location became an important consideration. Shiloh was in the midst of the hills of Ephraim, about half way between Bethel on the south and Shechem on the north. It continued the religious capital for three hundred years, or until the time of old Eli and young Samuel, when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. N. C. B. — Shiloh was situated in the tribe of Ephraim, in the very centre of Canaan, about twenty miles north of Jerusalem. It was therefore the most convenient location for all the tribes, and as Joshua was himself of the tribe of Ephraim, he, as chief magistrate of the nation, would always have a ready access to the sanctuary when the God of Israel was to be consulted. Bush. — The central position of Shiloh was combined with a rare degree of seclusion. Standing in the very heart of the land, a little to the “ east of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem,” Shiloh, on its gentle eminence, yet surrounded by loftier hills, was shut out from the world. A labyrinth of valleys leads up to it and off from it, so intricate as to render the services of a guide quite indispensable to the modern traveller. N. C. B. (Sec. 232.)

The ruined village Seilûn is the site of Shiloh, where the Ark first rested after the capture of Ai and Jericho, and where Joshua divided the newly-conquered land of Canaan among the twelve tribes. The position of Shiloh is accurately defined in the Book of Judges (21 : 19) to be on the north of Bethel, on the south of Lebonah, and on the east of the highway that goeth from Bethel to Shechem. There is very little to mark the site now but ruins and a curious excavation in the rock in the side of the hill. In a little valley about half a mile from the ruins are the spring and well of Shiloh, where the

daughters of Shiloh came out to dance at their periodical festival (Ju. 21). *Tent Work.*

INHERITANCE OF SEVEN TRIBES : BENJAMIN, SIM-EON, ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR, ASHER, NAPHTALI, AND DAN.

18 : 2-28 ; 19 : 1-48.

18 : 2-10. *Twenty-one delegated commissioners survey the remaining land and divide it into seven portions. By Lot Joshua assigns a portion to each of the seven tribes.*

Joshua solemnly admonished the assembled people as to their “ slackness” in taking possession of the land which Jehovah had given them. To terminate further jealousies, he asked the people to choose three representatives from each of the seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been allotted. These were to “ go through the land and describe it,” that is, to make a general estimate and valuation, rather than an accurate survey, “ with reference to their inheritance,” that is, in view of their inheriting the land. After their return to Shiloh these twenty-one delegates were to divide the land into seven portions, when the lot would assign to each tribe the place of its inheritance. A. E. — The surveying party, instead of mapping out the country by its natural boundaries (rivers or mountain ranges) or by lines of latitude and longitude, described it by cities and their adjacent villages. The whole was thus divided into seven parts, and these parts assigned to the seven tribes by lot. As Judah and Ephraim were found to have a disproportionate share, Benjamin’s allotment was taken from theirs, and also the allotment for Simeon was cut from the southwestern portion of Judah. H. C.

Inheritance of Benjamin.

18 : 11-28.

11. Between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph (33 : 12).

The prediction of Moses in regard to the lot of Benjamin was remarkably fulfilled. Bush. — The warlike little band of Benjamites, which had marched in the desert side by side with the mighty sons of Joseph, was not parted from them in the new settlement. It hung on the outskirts of Ephraim. Thus a group was formed in the centre of Palestine, firmly compacted of the descendants of Rachel, cut off on the north by the broad plain of Esdraelon. Stanley.

The territory assigned to Benjamin lay immediately to the north of Judah. In its general features it resembled Judah, but it was greatly less in extent. Notwithstanding its narrow

limits, it was the scene of many great events. It was "little Benjamin" that furnished the first royal "ruler" to the nation of Israel. Gibeah, Saul's capital, lay within its borders, as did also Jerusalem, emphatically and almost imperishably, "the holy city." Here, too, at first at least (for afterward it belonged to the kingdom of the ten tribes), was Bethel, where Jacob had his wonderful vision, and from whose heights Abraham got one of his first views of the Land of Promise. The Mount of Olives was in the tribe of Benjamin, and so were nearly all those places in and around Jerusalem which have been crowned with undying fame. Thus, though little, in one sense, among the tribes of Israel, Benjamin, in real interest and greatness, rivalled them all. It was not the least of its glories that Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, was a member of this tribe, and could describe himself as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin." W. G. B.

In the description of the lots of Judah and Benjamin, an account is given both of the limits by which they were bounded and of the cities contained in them. In that of Ephraim and Manasseh the boundaries are given, but not the cities. In this chapter Simeon and Dan are described by their cities only, and not by their borders, because they were small and the former lay within the limits of another tribe. The rest have both their borders described, and their cities named. *Bush.*

19: 1-9. *The Inheritance of Simeon.* This was included within the limits of Judah, and is elsewhere seldom or never spoken of as a *distinct district*. In this arrangement the providence of God is to be especially noted, as Jacob, in the spirit of prophecy, had foretold that Simeon and Levi should be "divided in Jacob," and "scattered in Israel." This was accordingly most literally fulfilled in the manner in which these tribes were now disposed of. Levi was "scattered" throughout all the land not having received any distinct inheritance, but only certain "cities to dwell in;" and Simeon, as we here learn, was "divided" or dispersed over the territories of Judah instead of having one of their own. This arrangement brought them into confederacy with the tribe of Judah (Ju. 1: 3), and afterward was the occasion of the adherence of many of this tribe to the house of David at the time of the revolt of the ten tribes. *Bush.*

10-39. *The four tribes of Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali* obtain contiguous portions in the north of Palestine, as they were allied in birth, and as they marched through the desert.

The forests of Lebanon, the fertility of the plain of Esdraelon, the port of Accho, figure in the blessings pronounced upon them. But, with the exception of the transient splendor of the days of Barak and of Gideon, they hardly affect the general fortunes of the nation. *Stanley.*

To *Zebulun* was allotted the hill country bordering on the great plain of Esdraelon from the sea-coast to the Sea of Galilee. *Issachar* received for his inheritance the fertile plain of Esdraelon, with the beautiful valley of Jezreel; here, on the highway of the armies of Egypt and Assyria, the great battle-field of Palestine, he was to lead a nomad life, dwelling "in tents," but at the same time he was equally with Zebulun to suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand. To *Asher* was assigned the sea-coast from Carmel to Sidon, with the plain of Phœnicia and the low hills on its western border—one of the richest tracts in Palestine, well fulfilling the promise made in the blessing of Jacob, that his "bread" should be "fat," and that he should yield "royal dainties;" and in that of Moses, that he should be "blessed with children," and "dip his feet in oil," and that his "shoes" should be "iron and brass." To *Naphtali* fell the broad elevated tract lying between Asher and the Jordan, which may still be described in the words of Josephus as "universally rich and fruitful, and full of the plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation by its fruitfulness"—a land in which Naphtali was to be "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord." *Wilson.*

Phœnicia was never conquered, and no one can help being struck by the peculiar relations that existed between the Israelites and their northern neighbors. In Ju. 1: 31, we are told that Asher did not drive out "the inhabitants of Accho, nor of Zidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, nor of Rehob;" and in verse 32, that the Asherites "dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land." Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath, but "he dwelt among the Canaanites;" nevertheless, the inhabitants of these towns became tributaries to him, and in the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, whose husband was "a man of Tyre, a worker in brass" (1 K. 7: 14), we have an indication that mixed marriages were not uncommon. There is no trace of any great war between the Israelites and the Phœnicians, and it is not unlikely that a considerable portion of the northern tribes settled down as fellow-citizens among the people of Tyre, Sidon, and other Phœnician

cities. *Wilson*.—It was to Zarephath, one of the towns of Phœnicia, that Elijah was sent, in the time of a great famine, to bring life and sustenance to the Syro-phœnician widow and her son ; and it was somewhere within the borders of this territory that another Syro-phœnician woman once came, seeking a greater prophet than Elijah, and, after a memorable exhibition of faith, went home rejoicing, her afflicted daughter having been made whole. *W. G. B.*

40-48. The last of the tribes that received its due was *Dan*, the smallest of all, at times overlooked, and in the last catalogue of the tribes that appears in the Sacred Volume (Rev.), dropped out altogether. It was squeezed into the narrow strip between the mountains and the sea, in the plain already occupied by the expelled races. *Stanley*.—Dan, though commander of one of the four squadrons of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, that which brought up the rear, yet was last provided for in Canaan, and his lot fell in the southern part of Canaan, between Judah on the east and the land of the Philistines on the west ; Ephraim on the north and Simeon on the south. *H.*

47. The meaning is that the Danites, being closely pressed upon by their powerful neighbors the Philistines, were forced in considerable numbers to abandon their allotted possessions. In consequence of having their original portion thus wrested out of their hands, they were induced to seek another in a distant quarter of the land, and made an inroad accordingly upon Leshem, lying at the foot of Mount Lebanon and near the sources of the river Jordan. This event, which occurred some time after the death of Joshua, and is more fully recorded (Ju. 18 : 1-29), is touched upon here both to complete what is said of the inheritance of the Danites, and to intimate how it happened that a part of the tribe were afterward found inhabiting a district of the country so remote from their original possessions. This addition to the narrative was perhaps made by Phineas. *Bush*.—The children of Dan fought against, and took Leshem, a city not far from Jordan, called Laish in the Book of Judges ; in aftertimes Cæsarea Philippi. They dwelt therein, or remained in undisturbed possession of it, and gave it the name of Dan ; all this was done after Joshua's death, and is related more largely in the Book of Judges (ch. 18). *Shuckford*.

To the tribe of Judah there fell a country abounding with vines and pasture grounds (Gen. 49 : 11), to that of Ashur, one plenteous in oil, iron and brass (De. 33 : 24), to that of Naphtali,

one extending from the west to the south of Judea (De. 30 : 23), to that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterward built (De. 33 : 12), to that of Zebulun, a country abounding in sea-ports (Gen. 49 : 13), to those of Ephraim and Manasseh, countries renowned for their precious fruits (De. 33 : 14), and to those of Simeon and Levi no particular countries at all, forasmuch as the former had a portion with Judah, and the latter was dispersed through the several tribes. Since, therefore, each particular lot answered so exactly to each prediction, we are supplied with the most indisputable proof that there was divine inspiration in these predictions, and divine direction in the distribution of the lots. *Stackhouse*.

The ultimate location of all the tribes in their own cities and territory was an event of profound significance, worthy to be long remembered. A great people, four hundred years oppressed in Egypt, forty years wandering homeless in the deserts of Arabia, full seven years up to this date in the conquest of Canaan, and therefore unsettled—in a state of war, living in camp : but now they fold up their tents and make their permanent homes in cities already built ; in houses constructed, not to say, furnished ready to their hand. Around them are lands under tillage, fruit trees in bearing condition, everything prepared for living with all the comforts of Oriental life. *H. C.*

The division of the land was carried out, so that not merely the limits of the tribal territories were fixed, but inside these also the districts of the families. Thus the life of tribe and family remained the basis of civil society. This certainly fostered a disposition to maintain the interests of the tribes at the cost of the national cause, in times when there was no powerful central authority, and every one did what seemed right to him ; but it also insured the propagation of the faith and customs of the fathers within the family circle, when declensions began to grow frequent. Thus the "good land" was won, where, on the basis of a life of husbandry requiring regular industry, the people were to be matured for the fulfilment of their destiny in quiet and retirement. *O.*

Lowman has given three different estimates of the extent of territory occupied by the twelve tribes ; the mean between the two extremes approaches probably the nearest to the truth. According to this computation, the Jewish dominion, at the time of the division, was 180 miles long by 130 wide, and contained 14,976,000 acres. "This quantity of land will divide to 600,000 men, about 21½ acres in property,

with a remainder of 1,976,000 acres for the Levitical cities, the princes of tribes, the heads of families, and other public uses." Assuming this estate of $21\frac{1}{2}$ acres assigned to each household, of course a larger proportion of pasture must have been given to those tribes who subsisted on their herds and flocks, than of arable to those who lived by tillage; the portions of the latter, therefore, must be considerably reduced. On the other hand, the extraordinary fertility of the whole country must be taken into the account. No part was waste; very little was occupied by unprofitable wood; the more fertile hills were cultivated in artificial terraces, others were hung with orchards of fruit-trees; the more rocky and barren districts were covered with vineyards. Even in the present day, the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil. Galilee, says Malté Brun, would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people, under an enlightened government. No land could be less dependent on foreign importation; it bore within itself everything that could be necessary for the subsistence and comfort of a simple agricultural people. The climate was healthy, the seasons regular; the former rains, which fell about October, after the vintage, prepared the ground for the seed; the latter, which prevailed during March and the beginning of April, made it grow rapidly. Directly the rains ceased, the grain ripened with still greater rapidity, and was gathered in before the end of May. The summer months were dry and very hot, but the nights cool and refreshed by copious dews. In September, the vintage was gathered. Grain of all kinds, wheat, barley, millet, zea, and other sorts, grew in abundance; the wheat commonly yielded thirty for one. Besides the vine and the olive, the almond, the date, figs of many kinds, the orange, the pomegranate, and many other fruit-trees, flourished in the greatest luxuriance. With a country under a delicious climate, where the corn-fields, the pastures, the vineyards, and olive-grounds vied with each other in fertility; perfect freedom and equality; a mild and parental government, the administration of justice by local authorities according to a written law; national festivals tending to promote national union;—had the people duly appreciated the blessings attached to the strict and permanent observance of their constitution, poets might have found their golden age in the plains of Galilee and the valleys of Judea.

The assignment of the different estates seems to have been left to the local government of each

tribe. Certain distinguished persons, as Joshua and Caleb, received grants of land larger than ordinary; but the whole land was subject to the common law of property. The great principle of this law was the inalienability of estates. Houses in walled towns might be sold in perpetuity, if unredeemed within the year; land only for a limited period. At the Jubilee, every estate reverted, without repurchase, to the original proprietor. Even during this period it might be redeemed, should the proprietor become rich enough, at the value which the estate would produce during the years unelapsed before the jubilee. This remarkable agrarian law secured the political equality of the people, and anticipated all the mischiefs so fatal to the early republics of Greece and Italy, the appropriation of the whole territory of the state by a rich and powerful landed oligarchy, with the consequent convulsions of the community from the deadly struggle between the patrician and plebeian orders. In the Hebrew state, the improvident individual might reduce himself and his family to penury or servitude, but he could not perpetuate a race of slaves or paupers. Every fifty years God, the King and Lord of the soil, as it were resumed the whole territory, and granted it back in the same portions to the descendants of the original possessors. It is curious to observe in this earliest practical Utopia the realization of Machiavelli's great maxim, the constant renovation of the state according to the first principles of its constitution. *Milman.*

On the conquest of Canaan, it was divided into twelve parts, which were assigned by lot to the different tribes. Thus the Hebrew state was a confederacy of twelve small provinces, like the Swiss cantons. The territory of each was then subdivided, so that a portion of land was assigned to every family. This gave to every man a fixed and permanent home. Each tribe was marched to its new possession, every family entered on its humble estate, and Israel began its national existence. This determined the occupations of the people. By planting every father of a family upon a plot of ground which he was to cultivate, Moses formed a nation of farmers—the best citizens for a free Commonwealth. The miracle was as great as if immense hordes of wandering Bedaween were instantly transformed into quiet husbandmen. Agriculture, keeping all the inhabitants at home, promotes patriotism and attachment to the national religion. Farmers are the strength of a state, for they are generally both peaceful citizens and brave warriors. A small state is never so invincible as when all its citizens are

independent freeholders. Then every man has an interest rooted in the soil. He fights for his country because he fights for his home. At the beginning the Hebrew state presented the remarkable spectacle of two millions and a half of people, all equal in rank, and very nearly so in condition. This fact is the more surprising when contrasted with the monstrous inequalities which prevailed in other Oriental countries. Indeed, a parallel to this it would not be possible to find in the most democratic modern state-*Field*.

It cannot be disputed that the Israelites, after having been enslaved for centuries in Egypt,

escaped by their unaided efforts from the strongest government in the world, crossed the sea, lived long in the peninsula of Sinai, and suddenly acquiring a warlike character, scattered the powerful armies of the confederate princes that opposed their entrance into Canaan. It cannot be disputed that they set up a remarkable civil and religious polity with laws and rites of a unique character, and that their whole institutions, civil and sacred, which lasted fifteen hundred years, sprang out of their history as it is recorded by Moses and Joshua. Can these facts be accounted for without the supernatural? Is it not true that of all things incredulity is the most credulous, and rationalism the most irrational? W. G. B.

Section 216.

CALEB'S REQUEST FOR THE INHERITANCE PROMISED BY MOSES ; JOSHUA'S GIFT IN FULFILMENT ; CALEB'S CONQUEST OF HEBRON AND DEBIR ; ACHSAH'S PETITION GRANTED BY CALEB. INHERITANCE OF JOSHUA. CITIES OF REFUGE ASSIGNED. THIRTEEN PRIESTLY CITIES. FORTY-EIGHT CITIES OF LEVITES. CONCLUDING STATEMENT.

JOSHUA 14 : 6-15 ; 15 : 13-19 ; 19 : 49, 50 ; 20 : 1-9 ; 21 : 1-45. JUDGES 1 : 10-15.

14 6 THEN the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal : and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD spake unto 7 Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land ; 8 and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went 9 up with me made the heart of the people melt : but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children forever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD 10 my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness : and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this 11 day as I was in the day that Moses sent me : as my strength was then, even so is my strength 12 now, for war, and to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day ; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fenced : it may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out, 13 as the LORD spake. And Joshua blessed him ; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of 14 Jephunneh for an inheritance. Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, unto this day ; because that he wholly followed the LORD, the God 15 of Israel. Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba ; *which Arba was* the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

15 13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even Kiriath-arba, *which Arba was* the father of Anak (the same is Hebron). And Caleb drove out thence the three sons of 14 Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. And he went up thence 15 against the inhabitants of Debir : now the name of Debir before time was Kiriath-sepher. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my

17 daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it : and he gave
 18 him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came *unto him*, that she
 moved him to ask of her father a field : and she lighted down from off her ass ; and Caleb said
 19 unto her, What wouldest thou ? And she said, Give me a blessing ; for that thou hast set me
 in the land of the South, give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs
 and the nether springs.

19 49 And the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun in the midst
 50 of them : according to the commandment of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked,
 even Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim : and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

20 1, 2 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Assign
 3 you the cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses : that the manslayer
 that killeth any person unwittingly *and* unawares may flee thither : and they shall be unto you
 4 for a refuge from the avenger of blood. And he shall flee unto one of those cities, and shall
 stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of
 that city ; and they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may
 5 dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver
 up the manslayer into his hand ; because he smote his neighbor unawares, and hated him not
 6 beforetime. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judg-
 ment, until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days : then shall the manslayer
 return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.
 7 And they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill
 8 country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. And
 beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness in the plain out
 of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan
 9 out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the appointed cities for all the children of Israel,
 and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person unwit-
 tingly might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood be-
 fore the congregation.

21 1 Then came near the heads of fathers' *houses* of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest,
 and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the
 2 children of Israel ; and they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The
 LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof
 3 for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, ac-
 cording to the commandment of the LORD, these cities with their suburbs.

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites : and the children of Aaron the
 priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of
 the Simeonites, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

8 And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as
 9 the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. And they gave out of the tribe of the children
 of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are *here* mentioned
 10 by name : and they were for the children of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites, who
 11 were of the children of Levi : for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them Kiriath-arba,
which Arba was the father of Anak (the same is Hebron), in the hill country of Judah, with the
 12 suburbs thereof round about it. But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they
 to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

13 And unto the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with her suburbs, the city of
 14 refuge for the manslayer, and Libnah with her suburbs ; and Jattir with her suburbs, and
 15 Eshtemoa with her suburbs ; and Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs ;
 16 and Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, *and* Beth-shemesh with her suburbs ;
 17 nine cities out of those two tribes. And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her sub-
 18 urbs, Geba with her suburbs ; Anathoth, with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs ;
 19 four cities. All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with
 their suburbs.

41 All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the children of Israel were
 42 forty and eight cities with their suburbs. These cities were every one with their suburbs
 round about them : thus it was with all these cities.

43 So the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers ; and

44 they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers : and there stood not a man of all their enemies before
45 them ; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel ; all came to pass.

[The cities of the Levites omitted in the text.]

6. We infer from the words and attitude of Caleb, and from the similar privileges afterward accorded to Joshua, that Moses had, by direction of the Lord, given these two a right of special and personal choice. This on account of their exceptional faithfulness, and as the sole survivors of the generation to whom the land had been given. Of this Caleb now reminds Joshua, and in words of such vigorous faith as make us love still better the tried old warrior of Jehovah. Appearing at the head of "the house of fathers," in Judah of which he was the head, he first refers to the past, then owns God's faithfulness in having preserved him to the age of eighty five, with strength and courage undiminished for the holy war. From verse 9 we infer that when the twelve spies distributed themselves singly over the land for the purposes of their mission, Caleb specially "searched" that "mountain," which was the favorite haunt of the dreaded Anakim. A. E.—We see in Caleb a life built on God's promise. Five times in his short speech does he refer to the word which "the Lord spake." On the first mention of it, he includes Joshua as the joint recipient of the promise, but in the others he speaks only of himself when he is urging his claim founded on it. A true reliance on God's word makes it a personal word, however many besides may have a portion in it. "He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*" is faith's version of "He so loved the world that he gave himself for *it*." A. M.

7. **I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.** That what came from the simple impulses of his heart was well pleasing to God, shows that his heart was right with God ; and that he had formed true conceptions of his character, his designs, and his covenant relations to Israel. A good understanding have all they that seek God—all they that love him ; and they can venture to speak all that is in their hearts, knowing under what influence their judgments have been formed. This was the case with Caleb.

8. **I wholly followed the LORD my God.** In this all his secret, all his distinction, lay. He wholly followed the Lord—he had no reserve, no secondary objects, no fears, no regard to human influence or man's opinions. *Kil.*—The energy of the expression is well preserved in our version. The words give the

idea of a traveller, who, intent upon following his guide, so treads in his steps as to leave hardly any void space between. As he had obtained this testimony from God himself, it was not vain-glory for him to speak of it, especially as this was the main ground on which he had become entitled to the object of his petition. It is not pride but simply a tribute of due acknowledgment to declare what a gracious God has done for him. *Bush.*—His language corresponded to his name, which means *All-heart*. He said then, "Let us go up at once and possess the land," not merely let us *attempt* it, since faith in Jehovah's promises *assures* him of success, "for we are well able to overcome it." His sole and firm dependence was on Jehovah : "It may be that the Lord will be with me, then I shall drive them out" (verse 12). He believed God's word to Judah (ch. 1 : 2), "Behold I have delivered the land into his hand." According to his faith it was to him. A. R. F.

He twice quotes the never-to-be-forgotten phrase which he had received from God, that he "wholly followed the Lord." The old soldier's cheek may well flush and his eye glitter, as he repeats the General's "well done." The commendation is high. Caleb had kept close behind his divine guide, and had not allowed fear or sloth or sense to shape his course. But, high as the praise was, it was God's judgment on his act, and he might well say it of himself after God had said it of him. He beautifully adds "my God" to the divine eulogium, thus unconsciously showing the root of his thorough obedience in his personal devotion, by which he had made the "God of Israel" (verse 14) his God, whom he possessed by faith and love, and who possessed him. Thus the old man looks back on the long stretch of eighty-five years, and sees in them two things,—God's preserving care and his own clinging to God, his leader and support. And still, a life of trust and following Christ however imperfectly does yield calm remembrances, which nothing else does, and for the lack of which nothing can compensate. If we would lay up for ourselves against old age the treasure of such calm and humble memories, we must in youth and manhood choose God for our God, and take heed to follow him though we may be singular ; and to do it wholly. A. M.

10. And now behold the LORD hath kept me alive. It was the Lord that did everything for him. He does not exult in the strength of his constitution, on which time had made so slight impression. Notwithstanding his consciousness of strength even in age—he does not venture to think himself equal to this great enterprise, unless the Lord were with him. *Kit.*—The dates given in this brief personal history of Caleb avail to show that this transaction was seven years after the crossing of the Jordan. Caleb being forty years (verse 7) of age at the mission of the spies from Kadesh-barnea and eighty-five now, the difference (forty-five) allows thirty-eight years for the remaining wilderness sojourning, and seven for residence in Canaan. These seven years measure the duration thus far of the wars of the conquest. H. C.

A man who wholly followed the Lord at forty is all right at eighty-five. The panic of his fellow-spies and the threatened stoning by the people made no differences at twoscore. He has no more fear of giants and walled cities at fourscore and five. He never for a moment lost his confidence in God's promise or his expectation of its fulfilment. That land was his from the instant of promise, as much as heaven is ours from the instant we claim the promise that was left us. *Bp. Warren.*

He considered the promise a gift of Hebron to him; and Joshua concurred in the opinion. For five and forty years he had kept this word "hid in his heart," and now he puts out a hand, unweakened by age and long-delayed fulfilment, to grasp the realization,—a grand example of steady, persistent faith, which waits for the vision, though it tarry, and buoyantly welcomes it when it comes at last! A life thus filled with trust in God's faithful word has ever present instalments of accomplishment, as brooks by the way, to keep its hope fresh. The prolongation of Caleb's life was the pledge to him of the fulfilment of the remoter promise. Faith, which looks forward to yet unfulfilled promises of an inheritance, is strengthened by a backward look on a life which, however commonplace its separate incidents may have seemed as they occurred, is discerned in retrospect to have been all of God, and all good. Such a life has hope burning as a guiding star to the very end. The heart which trusts to his sure word may make certain that, for this life, it can never outlive its joys nor its hopes, but that "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;" and that, after all earthly hopes have gone out in darkness, that hope which is set on God

shall "abide." God keeps his children alive in the wilderness, and brings them, after the desert, to the mountain of their inheritance, "whereof the Lord spake in that day."

This "old young man," as Thomas Fuller calls him, followed the Lord wholly; therefore he "brought forth fruit in old age," and the aged tree was "full of sap and green" in all its gnarled branches. In a very true sense, a man may keep himself young all his days. A youth and manhood of Christian sobriety and self-restraint, temperate, chaste, and free from the "sins of youth," which rot "the bones" and "lie down with" their victims "in the dust," is likely to conserve physical vigor. A life of Christian devotion and faith will keep its spring flowers blowing till late autumn, and blossom and fruit will hang together. The buoyancy, carelessness, hopefulness, cheeriness of youth are not far away from the aged heart, which lives by faith, and therefore dwells at ease, and is glad and secure, though the shadows of evening be falling. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." The perfection of life is to carry on to each stage the best of the preceding, harmonized with the best of the new. A Christian old age may be like Mount Hecla, which bears snow on its crest and a fire in its heart.

12. Caleb and Joshua had seen all that the other ten had, but everything depends on the eyes which look. The others had measured themselves against the trained soldiers and giants, and were in despair. These two measured Amalekites and Anakim against God, and were jubilant. They do not dispute the facts, but they reverse the implied conclusion, because they add the governing fact of God's help. How differently the same facts strike a man who lives by faith, and one who lives by calculation! Israel might be a row of ciphers, but with God at the head they meant something. Caleb's confidence that "we are well able to overcome" was religious trust, as is plain from God's eulogium on him in Nu. 14 : 24. The lessons from it are that faith is the parent of wise courage; that where duty, which is God's voice, points, difficulties must not deter; that when we have God's assurance of support, they are nothing. Now, Caleb claims his portion because God has given it him, and he urges his request for a chivalrous reason,—“Give me this mountain; . . . for . . . the Anakim were there, and cities great and fenced.” That is the true temper of the Christian soldier, seeking the hardest, not the easiest, work, and finding in

danger an attraction. How nobly it has been exemplified in many a mission field, to which, whenever disease has smitten down one, two have been ready to go! To-day American and English Christianity is showing that the old heroic fire burns yet, in the men who, on the Congo and elsewhere, have hazarded their lives for the name of Jesus, and been drawn to the field by its very dangers. Paul made a long stay at Ephesus, because a great door and effectual was opened, and there were many adversaries, and he knew the door to be effectual, just because the adversaries were many. Caleb's spirit is the true spirit for Christ's soldiers. A. M.

12. Another point which greatly interests us is to mark the combination of manly courage with humble acknowledgment of God which characterizes the speech of Caleb. He is prepared to take his possession with his good sword, yet he trusts for success not in his prowess, but in the blessing of God; nor, in his might, is he afraid of the fortresses or the power of the Anakim. We also should not desire success without our own personal and best exertions—whatever our calling be. Yet do we look for it, not from our own labor, but from the blessing of God; and in that struggle we fear no foe. A. E.

14. Caleb's readiness for one more fight was fed by his reliance on God's help in it. When he says, "It may be the Lord will be with me," the perhaps is that of humility, not of doubt. The old warrior's eye flashes, and his voice sounds strong and full, as he ends his words with "I shall drive them out, as the Lord spake." That has the true ring. What were the three Anak tribes, with their barbarous names, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, and their giant stature, to the onset of a warrior faith like that? Of course, "Caleb drove out thence the three sons of Anak," and Hebron became his inheritance. A. M.—"Add to your faith *manliness*," says Peter. Courage to avow and to obey your faith. Most failures in conduct are preceded by failures in courage. To face duty as well as danger requires hardihood of spirit. Now observe the magnificent manliness of Caleb. It gleams through his report as a spy. It is apparent in this choice of the as yet unconquered territory. It comes out in the energy of his old age. And this simple quality in one man was of incalculable service to Israel. We all need this quality. More manliness would mean less falsehood, less failure, less wretchedness of apprehension, more enterprise and grand success. And godliness begets it. For godliness gives larger thought, greater dignity, scope for grand

purposes, consciousness of help laid up in all providential law and processes. By communion with God man attains calmness, wisdom, strength, and help. Glover.

13. The claim thus made was immediately acknowledged, Joshua adding his blessing on Caleb's proposed undertaking. But it was many years later that the expedition was actually made. A. E.—15:14-19; Ju. 1:10-15. The reconquest of Hebron and vicinity occurred after Joshua's death. It is inserted in Joshua as appertaining to the history of Judah's allotment. Crosby.—Hebron was one of the most ancient towns in Palestine, built "seven years before Zoan in Egypt;" originally called Kirjath-arba, from Arba the father of Anak, it afterward received the name of Mamre, and was the scene of some of the most remarkable events in the lives of the Patriarchs. The town is prettily situated in a narrow valley, the sides of which are clothed with vineyards producing grapes still reckoned among the finest in Palestine. For a long period Hebron was the centre of the tribe of Judah, and in the extensive vineyards which surround it, producing the vine and grape, which were always, among the Jews, the type of the blessings of Jehovah, we may see "the choice vine" by which "Judah was to bind his foal; he was to wash his garments in wine, his clothes in the blood of grapes." Wilson.

17. This Othniel, who thus signalized himself when he was young, long after, in his advanced years, was led by the spirit to be both a deliverer and a judge in Israel, the first single person that presided in their affairs after Joshua's death. H.

18. As was the father, so was the daughter, the worthy offspring of a worthy sire, no degenerate child, but large-hearted, like the whole-hearted Caleb. Her father gave her in marriage to the victor of Kirjath Sepher, a stronghold of the enemy. Othniel, though urged by Achsah, was too modest to ask anything more from his father-in-law, having received from him the best of earthly gifts, a devoted wife. But Achsah knew her father's generosity and readiness to give, and that he only needed to be asked. Caleb did not even wait to be asked, but observing her eagerness anticipated her with his question, "What wilt thou?" "Give me a blessing," was her reply; "thou hast given me a dry land, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper and the nether springs; that is, springs on the higher and the lower ground. We need the upper and the nether springs. All that is good for us here below, and the fulness of joy

and pleasures for evermore above. God begins by giving the upper and heavenly blessings, and promises, if we make them our first desire, He will add with them the lower (Matt. 6 : 33). So that we shall experience that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." A. R. F.

Joshua's Inheritance.

19 : 49, 50.

49, 50. It was not until they had "made an end of dividing the country," and all other just claims had been satisfied, that the unselfish and public-spirited ruler received his own inheritance. The true nobility of Joshua's character shines out conspicuously here. He who might have claimed the first and largest share of the spoils of victory postpones his right to that of the meanest of his people. A special portion had been promised to him by God, as to Caleb, as a reward for "following the Lord fully" in the matter of the spies. But he calmly waits till all have received their portions before he "asks" for his own. And then it is no widespread district, no province, that he requires, but just one city. "They gave him that which he asked, and he built the city and dwelt there:" the name given to the city—Timnath-serah, "the portion that remains"—recording the fact that the conqueror's inheritance was the last assignment made in the whole distribution of his conquests. E. V.—Joshua was last served, though the eldest and greatest man of all Israel, and who, having commanded in the conquest of Canaan, might have demanded the first settlement in it for himself and his family. But he was content to be unfixed till he saw them all placed; and herein is a great example to all in public places, to prefer the common welfare before their particular satisfaction. Let the public be first served. He had his lot, *according unto the Word of the Lord*; it is probable, when God by Moses told Caleb what inheritance he should have (ch. 14 : 9), he gave the like promise to Joshua, which he had an eye to in making his election, which made his portion doubly pleasant, that he had it, not as the rest, by common providence, but by special promise. H.

Joshua takes care that every one is served before himself. Such utter self-abandonment as was displayed by Moses and Joshua affords incontestable proof of the claim of the Mosaic dispensation to have been Divine. The invasion of Canaan has been declaimed against as cruel; but its cruelty was at least the fruit of a moral

idea, a righteous indignation against an obscene and ferocious religion, which was itself the cause of infinite misery to mankind; while Joshua's cruelty was kindness itself compared to the revolting atrocities recorded at their own instance by the Eastern conquerors of old, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Moabite. We hear in excess of the impossibility of God's ordering the slaughter of the unoffending Canaanites. We hear nothing of the high morality, the sublime disinterestedness, the devotion to a grand ideal which characterized the giver of the Law and the conqueror of Canaan. Such characters have been rare since Christ came into the world. Save these two great men, they were unknown before it. *Lias.*

SIX CITIES OF REFUGE.

20 : 1-9.

20 : 3-6. In Nu. 35 *two kinds of murder* are distinguished in reference to which the avenging of blood is commanded: verses 16-18, if any one strikes another in such a way that death may be foreseen to be the probable consequence: verse 20, if one has slain another out of hatred, or by design, or out of enmity, in which case the means by which death was brought about is indifferent. On the other hand, in order to shelter from vengeance him who had slain a man undesignedly, without intending to hurt his neighbor, and inadvertently, the law provided for the selection of *six free cities*, three on the east, and three on the west side of the Jordan. The manslayer who fled into one of these must be protected from the avenger of blood who pursued him, after a provisional cognizance of the case by the elders of the free town, until the community of the place where the murder was committed had, through their elders, examined the matter. If the accused person was proved guilty of intentional murder, he *must* be given over to the avenger of blood, and even the altar could not protect him. In the opposite case, however, he was obliged to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest in whose time the murder had occurred. For *intentional* murder, there was no other expiation than the blood of the manslayer. The *jus talionis* is here maintained in the most stringent sense; every substitute for the punishment of death is refused. Nor can exemption from residence in the city of refuge in consequence of accidental murder be purchased. The custom of other ancient nations permitted the manslayer to satisfy the injured family by making compensation. O.

S. The cities on the other side Jordan, Bezer,

Ramoth, and Golan, had been assigned by Moses (De. 4 : 43), but did not, until now, obtain the privilege of cities of refuge. They were all Levitical cities ; which appears to have been so ordered, that the cases of manslaughter might come under the cognizance of those who might be presumed to be most thoroughly versed in the law of God, and most competent to give judgment according to it, and who moreover would be less likely than any others to be swayed by private bias in their decisions. Compare De. 21 : 5, where it is said of the priests, the sons of Levi, that “ by their word shall every controversy and every *stroke* be tried.” *Bush.*

Some observe a significance in the names of these cities with application to Christ our Refuge. I delight not in quibbling upon names, yet am willing to take notice of these. *Kadesh* signifies *holy*, and our refuge is the holy Jesus. *Shechem*, a shoulder, and the government is upon his shoulder. *Hebron*, fellowship, and believers are called into the fellowship of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Bezer*, a fortification, for he is a Strong Hold to all them that trust in him. *Ramoth*, high or exalted, for him hath God exalted with his own right hand. *Golan*, joy, or exultation, for in him all the saints are justified, and shall glory. *H.*

7. The six cities were chosen from all parts of the land, so that some one of them would be near to any scene of blood. The highways to the cities—so we are told—were prepared to facilitate the flight of the manslayer, and signboards were erected at intervals along them, with directing letters so large that he who ran might read. Now, three of the cities designated for refuge were on the east side of the Jordan, and three were on the west side. And of those on the west side, Hebron was one. “ They appointed,” it is said, “ Kadesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali”—to the north—“ and Shechem in Mount Ephraim”—in the middle of the country—“ and Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah”—on the south. *N. C. B.*

The existence of the cities of refuge and their purpose have often been used in illustration of the escape of men from the avenger of sin under the Gospel, and certainly with fine effect. There is much in any suggestion from such a source to stir the imagination and awaken the feelings. And this use of Old Testament usages is not only legitimate but praiseworthy, as indeed is everything which gives to well-known truth point, force, and incisiveness. But when matters are pressed beyond this, and we are bidden to see in all this arrangement a typical foreshadowing of the elements of the Gospel, essen-

tial truth is needlessly sacrificed. The typology of Scripture is a very important and useful branch of Biblical study, but it needs to be pursued with reverence and care. Conducted on genuine principles, it illumines much of the Old Testament, and imparts great freshness and vividness to the didactic statements of the New. But followed under the guidance of mere fancy or a capricious and arbitrary use of analogies, it sheds darkness instead of light, and is likely to lead its votaries sadly astray. *Chambers.*

The Lord is exalted in the Scripture as the Refuge, and between these cities of refuge and Christ as a Refuge there are some happy resemblance and some marked contrasts.

Points of Likeness. The cities were *always accessible*—could be entered at any hour of day or night. The manslayer never perished because of delay at the gates or because those gates were barred against him. So one of the unspeakably blessed things about Christ as a Refuge is that he is always accessible. The cities were *open to all*. There were no class distinctions in this provision of mercy. And a voice sounds out from the New Testament Refuge, saying, “ *Whosoever will*,” let him run into the strong tower and be safe. *The way to the cities was prepared and made plain.* The roads to them were to be kept open and in good repair. At the cross-roads posts were put up bearing the words *Refuge, Refuge*, to guide the flight of the fugitive. So for the flight of the sinner to Christ every obstacle has been removed. The way is made light with truth, and easy to the feet with exceeding great and precious promises ; and at every crossing and bypath there is a gospel signboard pointing to Jesus and bearing on it the evermore blessed words, “ The eternal God is thy Refuge !” The city of refuge *needed to be sought, and with effort.* The manslayer had no agency in providing the refuge, but there was necessary a very urgency of effort on his part to secure it. He could be no loiterer on his way there and count on security. Swiftly, eagerly, earnestly, with active feet and intense look and resolute heart, he must speed his way to the city or fail of its refuge. Imagine him thus in flight, and you have a vivid picture of the sinner fleeing for refuge to Christ. *Inside the city of refuge the manslayer was safe.*

“ So there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe—is safe ! Happy resemblances are these indeed. They are beautifully and strikingly illustrative of Christ as the Refuge of the sinner. They put before us in a

definite and tangible way some most precious truths about the Lord our hiding-place. But these points of likeness fail to set forth the chief and distinguishing glories of Christ as a covert from the tempest and a refuge from an avenging law and an accusing conscience and a hating and malignant devil. It is by contrast we can best be told all that the Lord our God is as our Refuge.

Points of Unlikeness. The city was a *temporary* refuge. Christ is an everlasting Refuge. The city of refuge was *sometimes distant*, taking hours, and even days, to reach it. *Christ is near*—so near that the sinner, no matter how far he may have wandered from God, if he but feel that he is athirst and weary, homeless, and perishing, need but turn to find that a spiritual Rock is beside him, and that Rock is Christ, in the cleft of which he may instantly hide and be at peace. The manslayer, turned to the city of refuge, and running with all his might to reach it, *could possibly fail*, nevertheless. With the sinner once turned to Christ as a Refuge failure is impossible. “Look and live,” that “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” These are the words that make it impossible a sinner should ever be overtaken by the avenging law while running to covert in the cleft of the Rock of ages. The refuge of the city freed from *unjust condemnation*. It only protected the involuntary homicide, the man who had slain another by accident, without evil intent or any intent. If he were proved a willful murderer, even the city of refuge did not shield him from the avenger of blood. But the refuge of Christ frees from *all* condemnation, just as well as unjust. The avenging law thunders at the gates of the strong tower, and, flaming out in terrible majesty its righteous and exact demands, declares that they have not been met by the fugitive within, and says, as if with the awful emphasis of Sinai, “His condemnation is just.” And a voice comes from the tower—a voice in which blends all the majesty of Sinai with all the pathos and tenderness of Calvary—saying, “It is true, O Law; it is true he is a sinner, but *he is mine*. I bore his sins in my own body on the tree. And there is now therefore *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus.” And before that plea Satan is silenced, and conscience is silenced, and the law is silenced. And the pursued, accused, and guilty sinner, pardoned and sheltered now, and *saved*, sings over and over, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath me are the everlasting arms.” *H. Johnson.*

FORTY-EIGHT CITIES ASSIGNED TO LEVI.

21 : 1-42.

Thirteen Cities of the Priests (verses 4, 8-19).

Thirty-five Cities of the Levites (verses 5-7, 20-42).

3. These cities were assigned by lot, that it might fully appear that God designed the Levites their *habitations*, as he designed the others their *inheritances*. The result of this arrangement would naturally be, that the Levites would be dispersed in every part of the land, to instruct the people in the knowledge of the Divine law, to edify them by their example, to restrain them from idolatry, and prompt them to a constant adherence to the worship of Jehovah, the only true God. Thus the prophetic sentence of the patriarch (Gen. 49 : 7), that they should be “divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel,” though originally carrying with it a punitive import, was through the special mercy of heaven converted to a blessing to themselves and to the nation.

4. The children of Aaron the priest.

All the Kohathites were children of Aaron, in being lineally descended from him, but they were not all *priests*; whereas the phrase “children of Aaron” here is but another name for the *priests*, his successors in office; and these had their allotment of cities in the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin; the rest, who were merely Levites and not priests, had their lot, as appears from verse 5, in the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. *Bush.*

Of the forty-eight Levitical cities, thirteen (verses 13-19) were properly sacerdotal, being assigned to the sons of Aaron, to whom the priesthood was exclusively confined. Although the cities were all assigned by lot, yet it was directed by a special Providence that the share which fell to the priests should be in the tribes nearest to the great city which God intended should be the fixed place of his worship, to the end that the priests might be always ready to give their attendance. *Patrick.*—It is remarkable that all the cities of the *priests* lay within the southern tribes; eight belonging to Judah, four to Benjamin, and only one to Simeon. This was wisely allotted by Providence, to guard against the evils of schism between the southern and northern tribes. For by this arrangement all these cities, except one, lay in the faithful tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to keep up the national worship in them in opposition to the apostasy of the other tribes; and that one may have remained under the control of Judah, as being situated on his frontier. Otherwise the kingdom of Judah might have experienced a

scarcity of priests, or have been burdened with the maintenance of those who fled from the kingdom of Israel, when Jeroboam made priests of the lowest of the people, without learning or religion, to officiate in their room. *Hales.*—

There is no evidence that the priests were bound to live in these, and in no other cities. When the tabernacle was at Nob, both the priests and Levites dwelt there (1 S. 21 : 1-7), and when the worship of God was established at Jerusalem, multitudes both of priests and Levites resided there, though it was no Levitical city ; as did the *courses* of the priests afterward at Jericho. This was a circumstance which Moses had foreseen and for which he had provided (De. 18 : 6). So, on the other hand, persons belonging to the other tribes were not precluded from living in the Levitical cities ; as, for instance, Gibeah of Benjamin, which is here made a Levitical city (verse 17), was always peopled by the Benjamites.

41. All the cities—were forty and eight cities, with their suburbs. This was in exact accordance with the direction given by Moses several years before, as we learn from Nu. 35 : 7. This order of Moses is a direct demonstration that it was given under Divine inspiration, as otherwise, how could he possibly have known that so many cities could be assigned to the Levites, without unduly encroaching on the limits of the other tribes? *Bush.*

Distribution Among the Tribes.

KOHATHITES.

Priests.....	{	Judah and Simeon.....	9
		Benjamin.....	4

Not Priests....	{	Ephraim.....	4
		Dan.....	4
		Half-Manasseh (West)....	2

GERSHONITES.

Half-Manasseh (East)	2
Issachar.....	4
Asher	4
Naphtali.....	3

MERARITES.

Zebulun.....	4
Reuben.....	4
Gad.....	4

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After their settlement in their cities they took the place of the household priests (subject, of course, to the special rights of the Aaronic priesthood), sharing in all festivals and rejoicings. They preserved, transcribed, and interpreted the law, which they solemnly read every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. At a still later time they became the learned class in the community, the chroniclers of the time in which they lived. They are described as “officers and judges” under David, and as such

are employed “in all the business of Jehovah, and in the service of the king.” They are the agents of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah in their work of reformation, and are sent forth to proclaim and enforce the law. Under Josiah the function has passed into a title, and they are “the Levites that taught all Israel.” The two Books of Chronicles bear unmistakable marks of having been written by men whose interests were all gathered round the services of the Temple, and who were familiar with its records. P. S.

What Jehovah said to Aaron (Nu. 18 : 30) is in De. 10 : 9 applied to the whole tribe of Levi—namely, that Jehovah Himself would be their inheritance. The tribe is scattered among the other tribes, in the territories of which it received forty-eight towns, with their *suburbs*—that is, pasturages. In this law the priests are included with the Levites. The tithes were assigned to them *for their support*, not an overabundant endowment. Even when the tithe was conscientiously paid, it was no certain income. Moreover, if the people showed themselves averse to this tax, the tribe of Levi was subjected to unavoidable poverty. And thus Deuteronomy represents the Levites as placed in a position requiring the support of alms, and as standing in the same line with strangers, widows, and orphans. O.

Distribution of the Land Completed. Concluding Statement.

21 : 43-45.

And now the ancient promise had been fulfilled : the solitary, childless patriarch who had listened to the Voice which spake at Ur of the Chaldees had grown by regular gradations into a family, a tribe, a horde, and now a nation. The inheritance of the heathen was theirs : wells they digged not, vineyards they planted not, cities they builded not—all these were theirs. Over the old strongholds of the mighty giant chieftains waved the banners of the House of Jacob. Joshua, the grave single-hearted soldier, had been enabled to finish thoroughly his mission. *Wilberforce.*

We may note in these verses the threefold repetition of the one thought, of God's punctual and perfect fulfilment of his word. He “gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give ;” “he gave them rest, . . . according to all that he swore ;” “there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken.” It is the joy of thankful hearts to compare the promise with the reality, to lay the one upon the other, and to declare how precisely their outlines cor-

respond. It is no small part of Christian duty, and a still greater part of Christian blessedness, to do this. Many a fulfilment passes unnoticed, and many a joy, which might be sacred and sweet as a token of love from his own hand, remains common and unhallowed, because we fail to see that it is a fulfilled promise. The eye that is trained to watch for God's being as good as his word will never have long to wait for proofs that he is. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even he shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." And to such a one faith will become easier, being sustained by experience; and a present thus manifestly studded with indications of God's faithfulness will merge into a future still fuller of these. A. M.

We have here the foregoing history summed up, and to make it appear the more bright, compared with the promise of which it was the full accomplishment. God's word and his works mutually illustrate each other. The performance makes the promise appear very true, and the promise makes the performance appear very kind. God had promised to give the seed of Abraham the land of Canaan for a possession, and now at last he performed that promise, they possessed it and dwelt therein. Though they had often forfeited the benefit of that promise, and God had long delayed the performance of it, yet at last all difficulties were conquered and Canaan was their own. And the promise of the heavenly Canaan is as sure to all God's spiritual Israel, for it is the promise of him that cannot lie. God had promised to give them rest in that land, and now they had rest round about. Rest from the fatigues of their travel through the wilderness, rest from their wars in Canaan. They now dwelt, not only in habitations of their own, but quiet and peaceable ones; though there were Canaanites that remained, yet none that had either strength or spirit to attack them. This rest continued till they by their own sin and folly put thorns into their own beds and their own eyes. God had promised to give them victory and success in their wars, and this promise likewise was fulfilled, *there stood not a*

man before them. They had the better in every battle, and which way soever they turned their forces they prospered. So that the foundation of God stands sure; Israel's experience of God's fidelity is here upon record, and is an acquittance under their hands to the honor of God, the vindication of his promise which had been so often distrusted, and the encouragement of all believers to the end of the world. *There failed not any good thing, no, nor aught of any good thing* (so full is it expressed), *which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel*, but in due time all came to pass. Such an acknowledgment as this, here subscribed by Joshua in the name of all Israel, we afterward find made by Solomon, and all Israel did in effect say *amen* to it (1 K. 8 : 56). The inviolable truth of God's promise and the performance of it to the utmost, is what all the saints have been ready to bear their testimony to; and if in anything it has seemed to come short, they have been as ready to own that they themselves must bear all the blame. H.

Here is the triumphant record of God's faithfulness. But the only name inscribed thereon is Jehovah's. Other memorials of victories have borne the pompous titles of commanders who arrogated the glory to themselves; but the Bible knows of only one conqueror, and that is God. "The help that is done on earth, he doeth it all himself." The military genius and heroic constancy of Joshua, the eagerness for perilous honor that flamed, undimmed by age, in Caleb, the daring and strong arms of many a humbler private in the ranks, have their due recognition and reward; but when the history that tells of these comes to sum up the whole, and to put the "philosophy" of the conquest into a sentence, it has only one name to speak as cause of Israel's victory. That is the true point of view from which to look at the history of the world and of the church in the world. The difference between the "miraculous" conquest of Canaan and the "ordinary" facts of history is not that God did the one and men do the other; both are equally, though in different methods, his acts. A. M.

Section 217.

RETURN OF THE ARMED CONTINGENT OF THE TWO AND HALF TRIBES.
WITNESS-ALTAR ERECTED. MISAPPREHENSION EXPLAINED.

JOSHUA 22 : 1-34.

- 22 1 THEN Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,
2 and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and
3 have hearkened unto my voice in all that I commanded you : ye have not left your brethren
these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD
4 your God. And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he spake unto
them : therefore now turn ye, and get you unto your tents, unto the land of your possession,
5 which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond Jordan. Only take diligent heed to do
the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love
the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave
6 unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. So Joshua blessed
them, and sent them away : and they went unto their tents.
- 7 Now to the one half tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *inheritance* in Bashan : but unto
the other half gave Joshua among their brethren beyond Jordan westward. Moreover when
8 Joshua sent them away unto their tents, he blessed them, and spake unto them, saying, Re-
turn with much wealth unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold,
and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment : divide the spoil of your enemies
with your brethren.
- 9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh re-
turned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan,
to go unto the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed,
10 according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses. And when they came unto
the region about Jordan, that is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children
of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.
- 11 And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad
and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar in the forefront of the land of Canaan, in
12 the region about Jordan, on the side that pertaineth to the children of Israel. And when the
children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered them-
selves together at Shiloh, to go up against them to war.
- 13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad,
14 and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the
priest ; and with him ten princes, one prince of a fathers' house for each of the tribes of
Israel ; and they were every one of them head of their fathers' houses among the thousands of
15 Israel. And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the
16 half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith
the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the
God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an
17 altar, to rebel this day against the LORD ? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which
we have not cleansed ourselves unto this day, although there came a plague upon the congre-
18 gation of the LORD, that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD ? and it will
be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the LORD, that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole
19 congregation of Israel. Howbeit, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over
unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take
possession among us : but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an
20 altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a tres-
pass in the devoted thing, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel ? and that man
perished not alone in his iniquity.
- 21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh an-
22 swered, and spake unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, The LORD, the God of gods, the
LORD, the God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know ; if it be in rebellion, or if in

23 trespass against the LORD (save thou us not this day), that we have built us an altar to turn away from following the LORD ; or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meal offering, or if to
 24 offer sacrifices of peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it ; and if we have not rather out of carefulness done this, and of purpose, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD, the God of Israel ?
 25 for the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad ; ye have no portion in the LORD : so shall your children make our children
 26 cease from fearing the LORD. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not
 27 for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice : but it shall be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we may do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings ; that your children may not
 28 say to our children in time to come, Ye have no portion in the LORD. Therefore said we, It shall be, when they so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we shall say, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offering, nor for
 29 sacrifice ; but it is a witness between us and you. God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn away this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offering, for meal offering, or for sacrifice, besides the altar of the LORD our God that is before his tabernacle.

30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation, even the heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the
 31 children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them well. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we know that the LORD is in the midst of us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD : now have ye delivered the
 32 children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word
 33 again. And the thing pleased the children of Israel ; and the children of Israel blessed God, and spake no more of going up against them to war, to destroy the land wherein the children
 34 of Reuben and the children of Gad dwelt. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed* : For, said they, it is a witness between us that the LORD is God.

RETURN OF THE TWO TRIBES AND A HALF.

Since the distribution of the land is now completed, the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites of the trans-Jordanic region, who had faithfully for seven years continued with their brethren in the subjugation of the western country, are dismissed by Joshua to their homes. As this return gave rise to a remarkable incident, which evinced the faithfulness of Israel, its details are carefully recorded in this chapter. *Crosby.*

1-6. The two and a half tribes did not go of their own accord even when their work was finished ; but Joshua " called " them and dismissed them with a blessing, now that God had given their brethren rest. A E.—Forty thousand fighting men, of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh, had willingly helped in the conquest, leaving their own newly-won homes on the eastern side of Jordan, and for seven long years taking their share in the hardships and dangers of their brethren. It was no small tax which they had thus cheerfully paid for the sake of brotherly unity. Their aid had not only been valuable as strengthening

Joshua's force, but still more so as a witness of the unbroken oneness of the nation, and of the sympathy which the tribes already settled bore to the others. Politically, it was wise to associate the whole people in the whole conquest ; for nothing welds a nation together like the glories of common victories and the remembrance of common dangers survived. The separation of the trans-Jordanic tribes by the rapid river, and by their pastoral life, was a possible source of weakness, and would, no doubt, have led to more complete severance, if it had not been for the uniting power of the campaign. Even as it was, the eastern tribes drifted somewhat away from the western ; but the disintegration would have been still more complete if no memories of the war, when all Israel stood side by side, had lived on among them. Their share in the conquest was not only a piece of policy,—it was the natural expression of the national brotherhood. The law for us is the same as for these warriors. In the family, the city, the nation, the church, and the world, union with others binds us to help them in their conflicts, and that especially if we are blessed with secure pos-

sessions, while they have to struggle for theirs. We are tempted to selfish lives of indulgence in our quiet peace, and sometimes think it hard that we should be expected to buckle on our armor and leave our leisurely repose, because our brethren ask the help of our arms. If we did as Reuben and Gad did, would there be so many who never stir a finger to relieve poverty, so many whose religion is much more selfish than beneficent? Would so many souls be left to toil without help, to struggle without allies, to weep without comforters, to wander in the dark without a guide? All God's gifts in providence and in the Gospel are given that we may have somewhat wherewith to bless our less happy brethren. "The service of man" is not the substitute for, but the expression of Christianity. Are we not kept here, on this side Jordan, away for a time from our inheritance, for the very same reason that these men were separated from theirs,—that we may strike some strokes for God and our fellows in the great war? Would that the church of to-day, with infinitely deeper and sacred ties knitting it to suffering, struggling humanity, had a tithe of the willing relinquishment of legitimate possessions and patient participation in the long campaign for God which kept these rude soldiers faithful to their flag and forgetful of home and ease till their general gave them their discharge! A. M.

It is well to take with us, as did they of the two and a half tribes, the testimony of earlier duties well performed. They will find good resting-places in active life who come to it from Shiloh after having well discharged their obligations in the position in which duty placed them. On the other hand, there was also full and generous acknowledgment on the part of Joshua. We are perhaps sometimes too niggardly in that respect, or else our acknowledgment is not put on the right basis. In this case it was faithfulness to their engagements to Moses, submission to Joshua, patient endurance, and steady adherence to the will of God as made known to them. A roll of humble achievements, some may say; but all the more difficult for their humbleness. A. E.

5. Take diligent heed. Joshua thinks it not enough merely to dismiss them with the commendations which their zeal and fidelity had so richly merited, but in the spirit of a true servant of God, adds his counsels. The expressions are remarkably varied and accumulated, to show in the most forcible manner the importance of a life of devoted obedience. They were to give the most diligent heed that the *love of God*, as the great ruling principle of action, was

deeply seated in their hearts; this must be evinced by the *universality* of their obedience, extending to every divine precept, and still further illustrated by the *constancy, humility, resolution, and affection* which were to characterize their walk. Counsel like this can never be unreasonable or superfluous. Even the most established Christian, as long as he abides in the flesh, needs to be "put in remembrance of these things." Especially does he need these kindly monitions when settled down in a state of peace and prosperity; for such a state is one of peculiar danger to his spiritual interests. These disbanded soldiers of Israel were now returning to their families, and the peaceful prosecution of their worldly business. They needed, therefore, to be reminded of the danger, of which Moses had long before warned them, of forgetting the Lord their God while enjoying "houses which they built not, wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they planted not." A constant mindfulness of God accordingly was the great object of Joshua's solicitude for his departing brethren. *Bush.*

Joshua bids them henceforth in their own homes fight that other warfare, in which victory means to love the Lord, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, to cleave to him, and to serve him with heart and soul. It was the old and yet the new commandment. Assuredly, there could not be better evidence of the spiritual character of the Old Testament than that its obligations and contents could be summed up in these three words: love, service, and obedience. A. E.—It is a rule of God's dominion that he shall be loved. Nor is it to be merely a vague good-will that we are bound to give him. Nothing general, impersonal or impassionate will satisfy him. It is vivid, impetuous, enthusiastic personal love that he orders us to feel for him; love without limit, love without reserve, love without a rival, love without an end, this is his rule, the law of his state. *H. S. Holland.*

He sends them away with one commandment, the imperative stringency of which is expressed by the accumulation of expressions in verse 5. They are to give diligent heed to the law of Moses. Their obedience is to be based on love to God, who is their God no less than the God of the other tribes. It is to be comprehensive,—walking in all his ways; it is to be resolute,—cleaving to him; it is to be whole-hearted and whole-souled service, that will be the true bond between the separated parts of the whole. Independence so limited will be harmless; and, however wide apart the paths may lie, Israel will be one. In like manner the bond that knits all

divisions of God's people together, however different their modes of life and thought, however unlike their homes and their work, is the similarity of relation to God. They are one in a common faith, a common love, a common obedience. Wider waters than Jordan part them. Graver differences of tasks and outlooks than separated these two sections of Israel part them. But all are one who love and obey the one Lord. The closer we cleave to him, the nearer we shall be to all his tribes. A. M.

8. Joshua blessed them. He bade them take the cattle, the precious and useful metals, and the raiment, which had been amassed as their share of the spoil of their enemies during their seven years of hardship and conflict. And he enjoins upon them to divide the spoil with their brethren who had remained in charge of their newly occupied inheritance over the Jordan. B.

Witness-Altar Erected on the West Side of Jordan by the Returning Tribes (verses 9, 10).

10. Built there a great altar to see to. The Hebrew word includes the idea of a view; and "an altar visible from a great distance," is probably the correct translation. It was intended as a landmark and a beacon to be seen from the eastern side, and there can be no

doubt that some prominent natural object, conspicuous from the eastern plateau, is the natural site to be looked for. Like most altars, it would be placed on a hill-top, and on one easily distinguishable in the range of the chalk peaks above the Jordan valley. It was a "great altar;" no mere pile of stones put up in a single night. The fighting men of two and a half tribes were concerned in its erection, and the fame of their work spread throughout the country. As a monument it may well have consisted of hewn stones, and in this it would have resembled the ancient beacons to be found in other conspicuous points throughout Palestine. From the internal evidence we are able to point with tolerable accuracy to the approximate position and character of the great Witness Altar. It must be near and above Jordan, on some hill-top west of the river, between the modern village of Seilún (Shiloh) and the ford of the Damieh, placed in a conspicuous position, and possibly giving ruins of some magnitude. In addition to which we should hope to find remains of the name in some modern Arabic word. There is but one spot in Palestine which will fulfil these requirements, and that spot is perhaps the most conspicuous in the country. From the heights of Ebal a sharp cone stands out against the white valley; from the castle of Kaukab el Hawa, near Genesaret, it is visible at a distance of thirty miles;



THE KURN SURTABEH. A PROBABLE SITE OF THE WITNESS-ALTAR.

from the shores of the Dead Sea and the plains of Jericho it stands forth prominently as a great bastion closing the Jordan valley ; from the eastern highlands it is no less conspicuous, and from the Judean watershed it is visible at a great distance. The place in question is the high cone of the Kurn Surtabeh, the Surtabeh of the Talmud, and one of the most important of our trigonometrical stations on the eastern border of the survey. The Kurn Surtabeh is the culminating summit of an almost isolated block of hill which closes in the broader part of the Jordan valley on the north. From the summit the whole valley of Jordan is spread out like a map. On the south lie the black groves round Elisha's fountain, the sharp peaks and shining waters and distant blue ranges round the Dead Sea. Nearer is the white cone, which rises, a miniature of the Kurn itself, against the sharp rocky precipices of the Mountain of Temptation, and which I have endeavored to show is the "rock Oreb" of the Book of Judges. Dark ranges close in to the watershed, shutting out the view of the first beacon station of the Rabbis on Olivet. On the east the great mountain wall stretches away north, broken only by the outline of the famous castle Kala'at el Rabad. At the foot of the mountain, 2000 feet below, lies a green plain. Beyond the plain are rugged hills, with steep slopes, the valley here becoming a mere gorge, and in the far distance are the hills of Gilboa, Tabor, and Kaukab, with the narrow thread of the Sea of Galilee, and the white crest of Hermon beyond all. Standing thus centrally as regards the eastern and western possessions of the tribes, the Kurn is very difficult of approach. The peculiarity of its summit consists in a cone or tell, about 270 feet high on the west, where it joins a narrow plateau. On other sides the slope is sheer to the base of the mountain, 2000 feet below. Upon the summit is a great platform 18 feet high, consisting of ten courses of stones beautifully cut, and averaging three or four feet in length, with a broad marginal draft. The platform is long and narrow, apparently solid, and of a most puzzling character. It was at once evident that it was either Jewish, or at the latest Roman work, and intended as a gigantic altar or beacon. The name may be still traced in the neighborhood. On the north side I find marked on our map as a valley name Tal'at Abu 'Ayd. *The ascent of the father of 'Ayd.* Between the Arabic 'Ayd and the Hebrew Ed, no scholar can fail to see the identity. *Conder.*

11. The law, to repress all danger of that plurality of worship which was the bane of all ancient religions, as well as to preserve the unity

of the tribes, had decreed that there should be but one altar—that at the tabernacle—for all the people. The act of the returning warriors was therefore open to the suspicion that they meant, if not to adopt another worship, at least to set up another and independent establishment for worship, which, besides the obvious tendency to idolatry, could not fail in the event to destroy the connection by which the tribes were linked together. The obligation of all the Israelites to resort three times in the year, for worship, to the sole altar of the people, was admirably suited to retain them as one people, by continually keeping before their minds their common origin and common obligations ; but if a separate establishment were allowed to exist they would cease to put themselves to the trouble of visiting the parent establishment in Canaan, and would, in no long time, come to regard themselves as a separate people. This was precisely the view of the case which struck the minds of the people. Their holy jealousy on this occasion for the glory of God and for the honor of the institutions he had given them, gives us a favorable opinion of the character of this generation. The sequel bears out this impression. *Ki'.*

12. The whole congregation—gathered themselves together. Not perhaps in their own persons, but by their representatives the elders, who transacted all affairs of this nature in the name and behalf of the people. **To go up to war against them.** The case was one that laid a just ground for suspicion. Having no conception of an altar being erected for any purpose but that of sacrifice, the other tribes naturally regarded it as an act of rebellion against God, and determined instantly to go and punish the supposed apostates. *Bush.*

Shiloh was the place of their rendezvous, because it was in defence of the divine charter lately granted to that place that they now appeared ; their resolution was as became a kingdom of priests, who being devoted to God and his service did not *acknowledge their brethren nor know their own children* (De. 33 : 9). They would immediately *go up to war against them*, if it appeared they were revolted from God and in rebellion against him : though they were *bone of their bone*, had been serviceable to them in the wars of Canaan ; yet if they turn to *serve other gods* they will treat them as enemies, not as sons of Israel, for so God had appointed (De. 13 : 12). They had but lately sheathed their swords and retired from the perils and fatigues of war to the rest God had given them, and yet they are willing to begin a new war rather than be any

way wanting in their duty to restrain, repress, and revenge idolatry and every step toward it. H.

Phinehas, the Priest, and Ten Princes sent on a Mission of Inquiry into the Two and a Half Tribes. Their Spirited Reproach and Generous Proposal. Reply of the Two and a Half Tribes, showing a Misapprehension of their Purpose in Erecting the Altar. Satisfaction and Delight of the Ten Tribes (verses 13-34).

Their prudence is no less commendable. God had appointed them in cases of this nature to *inquire and make search* (De. 13 : 14), that they might not wrong their brethren under pretence of righting their religion ; accordingly they resolve here not to send forth their armies to wage war till they had first sent their ambassadors to inquire into the merits of the cause, men of the first rank, one out of each tribe, and Phinehas at the head to be their spokesman (verses 13, 14). Thus was their zeal for God tempered, guided, and governed by the *meekness of wisdom*. He that knows all things and hates all evil things would not punish the worst of criminals, but he would first *go down and see* (Gen. 18 : 21). Many an unhappy strife would be prevented or soon taken up by an impartial and favorable inquiry into that which is the matter of the offence. The rectifying of mistakes and misunderstandings and the setting of misconstrued words and actions in a true light, would be the most effectual way to accommodate both private and public quarrels, and bring them to a happy period. H.

They send ere they go, and consult ere they execute. Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and ten princes, are addressed both to inquire and dissuade ; to inquire of the purpose of the fact ; to dissuade from that which they imagined was purposed. Not only wisdom but charity moved them to this message ; for, grant they had been guilty, must they perish unwarned ? Peaceable means must first be used to recall them, ere violence be sent to persecute them. *Bp. H.*

19. The proposal displayed a generous and disinterested spirit, a willingness to make sacrifices in order to preserve purity, and consequently peace. Rather than they should set up a separate altar from a groundless dissatisfaction with their inheritance, they would cheerfully welcome them back to the other side of the Jordan, “where the Lord’s tabernacle dwelt,” though they should straiten themselves by so doing. *Bush.*—They were willing to part with a considerable share of the land which God himself had by the lot assigned them, to com-

prehend them and take them in among them. This was the spirit of Israelites indeed. H.

21-29. On hearing to what constructions they had laid themselves open and how the transaction had been viewed, the two and a half tribes were overwhelmed with grief and astonishment ; they disclaimed the injurious imputation and declared the views on which they had really acted. They commenced by invoking God himself to witness the innocency of their intentions. The form in which they did this is the most emphatic that language can express, and such as can scarcely be represented in a translation. There are the three principal names of God in Hebrew—El, Elohim, Jehovah,—and all three are used together by them, and repeated twice. “El, Elohim, Jehovah—El, Elohim, Jehovah,”—he knoweth, etc. If translated at all, it might be perhaps thus :—“Almighty God, Elohim, Jehovah,” etc. ; for the first term involves the idea of might or strength. They proceed to declare that their object was in all respects the very reverse of that imputed to them. Instead of meaning a separation, they had set up their altar as a monument to future ages of the connection between the tribes separated by the river ; so that if, at any time to come, their descendants should attempt to cast off the connection and assert their own independence, or if the Israelites should hereafter attempt to disown their union and declare that the people beyond the river had “no part in the Lord,” this monument might be pointed to in evidence of the fact. *Kit.*

26-29. Having this copy of the altar in their custody, it might be produced as an evidence of their right to the privileges of the original. Every one that saw this altar, and observed it was never used for sacrifice and offering, would inquire what was the meaning of it, and this answer would be given to that inquiry, that it was built by those separate tribes, in token of their communion with their brethren, and their joint interest with them in the altar of the Lord. H.—Since therefore we may not either remove God’s altar to us or remove our patrimony to the altar, the pattern of the altar shall go with us, not for sacrifice but for memorial ; that both the posterity of the other Israelites may know we are no less derived from them than this altar from theirs, and that our posterity may know they pertain to that altar whereof this is the resemblance. *Bp. H.*

29. God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord. We cannot have a stronger proof of the zeal of the whole nation for the observance of the Divine law than this

transaction between the two tribes and a half, and the remaining tribes. The impression was, indeed, most deep which the judgments of God had made on the whole nation, that they were animated with the most watchful anxiety to fulfil the Law and to avoid the wrath of Jehovah, at once their Sovereign and their God. *Graves.*

30-34. We have here the good issue of this controversy, which, if there had not been on both sides a disposition to peace, as there was on both sides a zeal for God, might have been of ill consequence ; for quarrels about religion, for want of wisdom and love, often prove the most fierce and most difficult to be taken up. But these contending parties, when the matter was fairly stated and argued, were so happy as to understand one another very well, and so the difference was presently compromised. *H.*—We behold very much to admire in both. When the accusers found themselves mistaken, they did not shift their ground, and condemn their brethren for imprudence ; nor when the accused had evinced their innocence, did they upbraid their accusers with hasty, rash, or unjust surmises. Aware that the measure was easily susceptible of the interpretation their brethren had put upon it, they took their reproofs, severe as they were, in good part, and instead of angry retorts or recriminations, gave them the soft answer which turneth away wrath, and by a candid and honest declaration of their real intentions at once set themselves right in the opinion of their brethren. *Bush.*

Leaving Egypt while yet young or wilderness born ; mostly uncontaminated with her idolatries and pollutions of moral life, looking upon the scenes of the Exodus and of Sinai with young eyes and susceptible souls ; trained under Moses forty years ; taking the ritual of religious worship in its freshness, with hearts tender to its first strong impressions—they give us certainly the best fruits of this wonderful moral and religious training. So many fearers of God—so large a host imbued with the spirit of obedience to God's authority—the world had never seen before. They were prepared of God for the conquest of Canaan. They are living witnesses that the discipline of those desert wanderings was not in vain. *H. C.*

The revulsion of popular feeling at once rendered the monument one of the most favorite sites in the country—a bond of union between the divided tribes. “The thing pleased the children of Israel. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed : for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is

God.” *Conder.*—It was a witness of the relation they stood in to God and Israel, and of their concurrence with the rest of the tribes in the same common faith, *that Jehovah he is God*, he and no other. It was a witness to posterity of their care to transmit their religion pure and entire to them, and would be a witness against them if ever they should forsake God, and turn from following after him. *H.*

Two noble lessons stand out conspicuously in this record touching the two and a half tribes. First, it teaches specially the same great truth which is illustrated in the history of the whole people. The great mission of the Hebrew people was to establish nationally, in order to its later establishment universally, the worship and service of the true God. Their occupation of the promised land got all its great importance as being a means to that end and a reward of that effort and achievement. Their ultimate and pre-eminent quest, as the old knights called it, was the kingdom of God. The two and a half tribes recognized this—vaguely, maybe, yet genuinely—when, proposing to settle east of Jordan, they nevertheless placed their own material fortunes second, in time and value, to the completion of the conquest of Canaan. It was an exhibition of their faith in the precept of Christ, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.” They made that search and effort first in order of time ; and Joshua commends them and dismisses them to the enjoyment of their reward. But at the same time he warns them that this dismissal does not dismiss ; that to make this effort first, once, in time, is not all ; they must keep it first in their desires, efforts, and valuations. “Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, . . . to love the Lord . . . and to serve him.” The other lesson is the brotherhood of all God's children, and the duty of conforming religion—life—not two things but one in two aspects—to this idea. Our religion must be controllingly unselfish. These two and a half tribes actually consecrated their lives during the time of the conquest, put them in all the jeopardies of frequent, bloody battle, for the establishment of their brethren in the kingdom of God. They laid down their lives for the brethren. Whoever seeks the kingdom of heaven for himself alone may win it, so great is God's mercy and compassion ; but he cannot even keep it, much less enlarge and extend his entrance into it, unless he widens out his solicitude and effort un-

til it includes the bringing of that kingdom to his brother man, and him into it. *Cable.*

The work given Israel to do was emphatically a work of God, bearing on it the impress alike of His greatness and His holiness. And both a living faith and a sanctified heart were needed, on the part of Israel, to fulfil what was required of them. On this account special supports were given to faith in the miracles wrought by God at the commencement of the work, in the separation of the waters of the river and the falling of the walls of Jericho, as afterward in the extraordinary prolongation of the day at the request of Joshua; showing it was God's work rather than their own they were accomplishing, and that His power was singularly exerted in their behalf. And not only in the charges given to Joshua regarding his careful meditation of the law of God, and punctual observance of all that was commanded in it; but also, and more particularly, in the discomfiture appointed on account of the sin of Achan, was the necessity

forcibly impressed upon the people of the maintenance of holiness; they were made to feel the inseparable connection between being themselves faithful to God, and having power to prevail. It served also impressively to teach them their unity as a people and how the holiness which they were bound collectively to maintain, must be individual, in order that it might be national. Nor was the instruction disregarded by the immediate agents in the work of judgment. They cast out from among them the sin that was discovered in Achan; and, at a later period, their jealousy regarding the tribes on the other side of Jordan, lest they would separate themselves from the one altar and commonwealth of Israel, and the protestations of allegiance to God which Joshua made before his death, and they again to him, clearly showed that much of the spirit of faith and holiness rested upon that generation. In them the covenant found, in no small degree, a faithful representation, as well in regard to its requirements of duty, as to its promises of grace and blessing. *Fairbairn.*

Section 218.

PARTING ADDRESSES OF JOSHUA. ISRAEL'S RENEWAL OF COVENANT WITH JEHOVAH. DEATH AND CHARACTER OF JOSHUA. BURIAL OF THE BONES OF JOSEPH. DEATH OF ELEAZAR.

JOSHUA 23 : 1-16 ; 24 : 1-33. JUDGES 2 : 6-10.

23 1 AND it came to pass after many days, when the LORD had given rest unto Israel from
2 all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well stricken in years; that Joshua
called for all Israel, for their elders and for their heads, and for their judges and for their
3 officers, and said unto them, I am old and well stricken in years: and ye have seen all that the
LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God, he
4 it is that hath fought for you. Behold, I have allotted unto you these nations that remain, to
be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even
5 unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun. And the LORD your God, he shall
thrust them out from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess
6 their land, as the LORD your God spake unto you. Therefore be ye very courageous to keep
and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom
7 to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain
among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*,
8 neither serve them, nor bow down yourselves unto them: but cleave unto the LORD your God,
9 as ye have done unto this day. For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations
10 and strong: but as for you, no man hath stood before you unto this day. One man of you
shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he spake
11, 12 unto you. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. Else
if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that
remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

13 know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight ; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.
 14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth : and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you ; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof.
 15 And it shall come to pass, that as all the good things are come upon you of which the Lord your God spake unto you, so shall the Lord bring upon you all the evil things, until he have
 16 destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down yourselves to them ; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

24 1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers ; and they presented
 2 themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham,
 3 and the father of Nahor : and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and
 4 gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau : and I gave unto Esau mount Seir,
 5 to possess it ; and Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did in the midst thereof : and after-
 6 ward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt : and ye came unto the sea ; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and with horsemen unto the Red
 7 Sea. And when they cried out unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them ; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt :
 8 and ye dwelt in the wilderness many days. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt beyond Jordan ; and they fought with you : and I gave them into your hand, and
 12 ye possessed their land ; and I destroyed them from before you. And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites ; not with thy
 9 sword, nor with thy bow. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought
 10 against Israel ; and he sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you : but I would not hearken unto Balaam ; therefore he blessed you still : so I delivered you out of his hand.
 11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho : and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Gergashite, the
 13 Hivite, and the Jebusite ; and I delivered them into your hand. And I gave you a land whereon thou hadst not labored, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell therein ; of vine-
 14 yards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth : and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the
 15 River, and in Egypt ; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me
 16 and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that
 17 we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods ; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the
 18 peoples through the midst of whom we passed : and the Lord drave out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land : therefore we also will serve the
 19 Lord ; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord ; for he is an holy God ; he is a jealous God ; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins.
 20 If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay ; but we
 22 will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves
 23 that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now, therefore put away, *said he*, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart
 24 unto the Lord, the God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will
 25 we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God ; and he took a great stone,
 27 and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said
 unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us ; for it hath heard all the
 words of the LORD which he spake unto us : it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye
 28 deny your God. So Joshua sent the people away, every man unto his inheritance.

Ju. 2 6 Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man
 unto his inheritance to possess the land.

Josh. 24 29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant
 30 of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border
 of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of
 31 the mountain of Gaash. And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days
 of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen and known all the great work of the LORD, that
 32 he had wrought for Israel. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up
 out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons
 of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of money : and they became the in-
 33 heritance of the children of Joseph. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died ; and they buried
 him in the hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Ju. 2 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers : and there arose
 another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the work which he had
 wrought for Israel.

Chapters 23 and 24 transmit two discourses of Joshua to the assembled people of Israel, both of which meetings and addresses must have been near the close of his life. It is probable that there were two different meetings rather than two addresses at the same meeting, since that of chapter 23 is made specific by its *note of time*. "A long time after" (verse 1); while that of chapter 24 is made definite by a *note of its place*, "to Shechem" (verse 1). In both cases the call embraced "all Israel," with their "elders, heads, judges, and officers." The general purpose of each meeting was the same ; yet the things said by Joshua in each were quite different. In the second meeting, the national covenant was solemnly renewed at Shechem. H. C.

A twofold work had been intrusted to Joshua : to *conquer the land*, and to *divide it by inheritance* among the people. Both had been done in the spirit of strength, of courage, and of believing obedience enjoined at the outset. Unlike his great predecessor Moses, he had been allowed to finish his task and even to rest after its completion. And now he had reached one hundred and ten years, the age at which his ancestor Joseph had died. Like a father who thinks of and seeks to provide for the future of his children after his death ; like Moses when he gathered up all his life, his mission, and his teaching in his last discourses ; so did Joshua care for the people of his charge. On two successive occasions he gathered all Israel, to address to them last words. They are in spirit and even in tenor singularly like those of Moses, as indeed he had no new truth to communicate. A. E.

Chapter 23 may be summed up in the words,

"Be ye therefore *very courageous* to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." He well remembered all the experience of the desert, and all the warnings of Moses. He reminds them of all that God had done to the Canaanites for their sakes ; and promises that the land divided to them should be wholly theirs and the heathen be driven out before them. On their part they had thus far been faithful ; let them still thus cleave to Jehovah their God ! Let them not mix with the people that remained ; nor name their gods, nor swear by them, nor worship them ! If once they began this course, and if they intermarried with them, God would cease to drive out those nations, which would become to them as snares and scourges and thorns, till they themselves should perish from the land. P. S.

5. The wars under Joshua put Israel into possession of Canaan and broke the power of its inhabitants, but the latter were not exterminated, nor yet all their cities taken by Israel. Indeed, such a result could scarcely have been desirable, either in reference to the country or to Israel, while, from Ex. 23 : 28-30 and De. 7 : 22, we know that from the beginning it had not been the Divine purpose. But there was also a higher object in this. It would teach that a conquest, begun in the power of God and in believing dependence on Him, must be completed and consolidated in the same spirit. Only thus could Israel prosper as a nation. Canaan had been given to Israel by God, and given to their faith. But much was left to be done which only the same faith could achieve. A. E.

6. Joshua here repeats the essential part of the charge he himself had received from Jehovah at his commission (ch. 1 : 7). *Be very courageous to do*, God had said to him then. And now, after thirty years of unwavering obedience, he transmits the charge in almost identical terms, "*Be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the law of Moses, turn not therefrom to the right hand or to the left!*" B.

As ye have done this day. It could be only in a limited sense that this praise could be given to the children of Israel. But probably during that score of years which intervened between the entrance into Canaan and the death of Joshua the Hebrews were more true in their allegiance to their heavenly King than at any other period. While Joshua lived they did cleave as fully as they ever cleaved to the Lord their God. *Paget.*—At the death of Moses a sudden gleam of heaven came over the elder Church; all was privilege on the one side, all was obedience on the other. Joshua led the people into rest and prosperity. His history is made up of two parts: triumph and peace. *Newman.*

12-16. Joshua once more presses upon the people their true character as the chosen people of the Lord God. He is able now to appeal to facts; to point to what God has done, to call the people themselves to witness that all the promises of God have come to pass, and that not one good thing hath failed of all those which the Lord their God had promised them. Joshua found in his old age nothing to retract of what he had said in former times concerning God and the people, and the relation of the one to the other. He next implores the people to guard against backsliding. He says: Go on as you have begun, and God will bless you; your shame, and misery, and damnation will be if you turn back from following the Lord. *Goodwin.*

13. The promise which God had made to the Israelites was conditional: and as they manifestly forfeited their part of the obligation by engaging first in affinity and afterward in idolatry with the nations which they were bound to destroy, so God would no longer grant them success and enlargement of their boundary; but as they had been the ministers of his vengeance in punishing the disorders of the Canaanites, so the Canaanites were to be made the instruments of his chastising the disobedience of his own people. *Stackhouse.*

14. "Ye know that *not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord spake concerning you.*" God had promised them victory,

rest, plenty, his tabernacle among them, etc., and *not one thing had failed* of all he had promised. "Now," said he, "has God been thus true to you? Be not you false to him." It is the apostle's argument for perseverance (Heb. 10 : 23), *He is faithful that has promised.* H.—**15, 16.** But as they had experienced the good, and were now in the enjoyment of it, so the evil would as certainly come, if they were disobedient. This is three times mentioned here. Your enemies will vex you *until ye perish from off this good land* (verse 13). God will plague you *until he have destroyed you from off this good land* (verse 15). Heaven and earth will concur to root you out. So that (verse 16) *ye shall perish from off the good land.* Joshua thus sets before them the fatal consequences of their apostasy, that *knowing the terror of the Lord*, they might be persuaded *with purpose of heart to cleave to him.* H.—We may bring forth every promise from the Bible, and then search the annals of the world, and one single instance will be sought in vain of God's violating or forgetting a promise. The accomplishment may have been delayed or brought to pass in a way that was not expected, but the whole world may be challenged to impeach his veracity, or contradict the assertion that "*all which he hath promised is come to pass; not one thing hath failed thereof.*" But let it not be forgotten that the veracity of God is as much pledged for the execution of his threatenings, as for the performance of his promises. The one is a proof of the other. *Bush.*

FINAL GATHERING OF ISRAEL AT SHECHEM. JOSHUA'S CLOSING ADDRESS. RENEWAL OF COVENANT.

24 : 1-28. *Ju.* 2 : 6.

The second address of Joshua was even more solemn. For the assembly took place at Shechem, where on first entering the land Israel had made solemn covenant by responding from Mounts Ebal and Gerizim to the blessings and the curses enunciated in the law. And the present gathering also was to end in renewal of that covenant. Moreover, it was in Shechem that Abraham had, on entering Canaan, received the first Divine promise, and here he had built an altar unto Jehovah. Here also had Jacob settled after his return from Mesopotamia, and purged his household from lingering idolatry, by burying their Teraphim under an oak. It was truly a "sanctuary of Jehovah" (verse 26), and they who came to it "gathered before God" (verse 1). A. E.—The place was sacred by these past manifestations of God and devo-

tions of the fathers, so that we need not wonder that Joshua selected it rather than Shiloh, where the ark was, for the scene of this national oath of obedience. Patriotism and devotion would both burn brighter in such an atmosphere. A. M.

The final farewell of Joshua, the manifest dignity and serenity of saintly ripeness, the vigor of his exhortations, and the assurance of his faith, are worthy of devout study. This his last service is his best service. He had been faithful as a spy, as the helper of Moses, as a warrior and leader, and as a divider of the land among the tribes. But here he seeks to lead them into covenant with God, that they may through faith and obedience be enabled to keep all they had conquered. *Glover.*

In the first meeting Joshua reminded the people of all the Lord had wrought for them in *Canaan*, subduing their enemies and giving them the land so long before promised to their fathers. Upon the basis of these great facts he exhorted the people to courage and faith in whatever conflicts of arms might be yet before them; but especially implored them to stand invincibly against idolatry and cleave to the Lord their God alone, assuring them that as God had faithfully fulfilled all his promises of good to the nation while obedient, so would he as faithfully fulfil his threatenings of evil if they apostatized to idols. In this the second meeting and address Joshua takes a larger range of historic review, sketching the history of Abraham even from his native home on the other side of the great Euphrates ("the flood," as our translators render the Hebrew word "*the river*"); then continuing his sketch through Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Moses, the Exodus, Balak, the wars of *Canaan*, and finally the possession of lands put under cultivation by other laborers and cities built by other hands. All this history is presented for the purpose of enforcing his final appeal; "Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the Euphrates." H. C.

In language most tender and impressive Joshua recalled to them the mercies of God (2-13), specially in those five great events: the calling of Abraham, the deliverance from Egypt, the defeat of the Amorites and of the purpose of Balaam, the miraculous crossing of Jordan and taking of Jericho, and finally, the Divine victory given them over all the nations of *Canaan*. On these grounds he now earnestly entreated them to make decisive choice of Jehovah as their God. And they replied by solemnly protesting their

determination to cleave unto the Lord, in language which not only re-echoed that of the preface to the Ten Commandments, but also showed that they fully responded to Joshua's appeals. A. E.

Nothing can be conceived more impressive or sublime than the circumstances of this last public interview of the aged leader with the people whom he had put in possession of the goodly land of *Canaan*, and who had so often followed him in his victorious path. In the midst of the elders, the chiefs, and magistrates of Israel; surrounded by a respectful people, formerly bondsmen of Pharaoh but now in possession of a rich and beautiful country, their illustrious and venerable commander—the oldest man in all their nation—spoke to them as to his sons. And of what did he speak? He was a soldier, and his career had been essentially military; yet he spoke to them not of conquest, but of the holiness and obedience which become the people chosen of God. It is such a discourse as a patriarch might have given on his death-bed, or a prophet might have uttered from the valley of vision. *Kit.*

14, 15. The Israelites were in most danger from idolatry, and therefore, as a pledge of their sincerity, and as a help to their future perseverance, if they were earnest in their present purpose to serve the Lord, Joshua requires them to put away their idols. *Hamilton.*—This is not a demand to purge themselves from actual idolatry, into which they had not yet fallen, but to renounce forever the examples which might seduce them to it. He ends with an appeal, unequalled in simple force except by that of Elijah to Israel; if they found fault with the service of Jehovah, let them at once choose whom they would serve, whether the idols of their fathers, or the gods of the Amorites; but his own choice was made, to serve Jehovah. P. S.

Notice here the same striking decision of character and thorough independence of thought and will which we have seen in all his military life. To the people he said, "If ye see fit to serve other gods, make your choice, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" My house will go where I lead. My decision is made, and can never be reversed; *we serve the Lord!* H. C. —*This resolution to serve was a very noble one.* He would not serve alone. His house and his family were also included. He could not command the tribes, since his authority was at an end. But he still held authority over his household, and the force of his example and the influence of his character would be gener-

ally felt. It too often occurs that heads of families who profess to be religious manifest but little concern for the members of their family, or having given up all thoughts of religion themselves, still cherish some concern for their children and express an anxious hope that *they* may become truly pious. But every true servant of God will be especially anxious for himself first, and then for his own flesh and blood. He will not wait for them, but lead the way and set them a bright example. *R. Hall.*

Choose you. There are but two gods in this world, Jehovah and—under whatever one of his thousand idolatrous disguises he may be hidden—self. Choose which of these you will serve. Choose ; do not merely assent and approve, choose. Do not serve now one and now the other, as one or the other seems easiest or pleasantest to serve ; do not try to serve both ; choose between them ; choose ! *Cable.*—Joshua's putting of the matter here to this issue, plainly intimates two things, *First*, That it is the will of God we should every one of us make religion our serious and deliberate choice. Let us state the matter impartially to ourselves, weigh things in an even balance, and then determine for that which we find to be really true and good. *Secondly*, That religion has so much self-evident reason and righteousness on its side, that it may safely be referred to every man that allows himself a free thought, either to choose or refuse it ; for the merits of the cause are so plain that no considerate man can do otherwise but choose it. The case is so clear that it determines itself. *H.*

God deals with men as rational creatures. He proposes adequate motives for choosing his service. He sets before them life and death, blessing and cursing ; and exhibits the responsibility arising out of such knowledge, the happy results of a compliance with the precept, and the terrible consequences of a refusal. *R. Hall.*—There is surely no such crowd of motives and reasons attendant on any other question as on that of the reception of Christianity. It is a question between life and death, in which our highest interests are concerned, which appeals to our hopes and fears, our consciences, our aspirations after a better life, our gratitude and love. It founds its appeals on the most remarkable facts in the universe, on the love of God to sinners, on the incarnation and death of Christ. We have the offer of pardon, peace, help to raise us up to God, deliverance from fear, support in death, and a blessed immortality. The way in which the Gospel comes to us is the most inviting possible—through a person who lived

a life like ours on earth, and came into tender sympathy with us ; through a concrete exhibition of everything true and good, not through doctrine and abstract statement. It has been the religion of our fathers, and of the holy in all time. It is venerable in our eyes. It is God's voice to us. Where else can so many motives, such power of persuasion be found ? *Woolsey.*

A man may be urged to decide whether he will be God's true child and servant or not ; whether he will serve God or himself, Christ or this world, the Holy Spirit or Satan. He may be urged to make it on the right grounds, to make it fairly and intelligently, to make it for his eternal life, and to declare it honestly when he makes it. But make it he must. There are only two possible attitudes in which any man can stand toward God in Christ : one is that of union, the other of opposition ; one is that of willing, conscious, faithful, affectionate obedience, the other is that of distrust, separation, alienation. Not to be in the first is to be in the last. Neutrality is utterly out of the question. "He that is not with me is against me." *F. D. H.*—The claims of Christ are so supreme and unquestionable that to be neutral is to be hostile. Indifference to Him is opposition. His majesty is so great He will brook no rival. *R. Hall.*

19. To bring the matter to a clear issue, Joshua next represented to them that *they could not serve Jehovah*, that is, "in their own strength, without the aid of grace ; without real and serious conversion from all idols ; and without true repentance and faith." *A. E.*—Joshua was stating the plain fact which his own higher conception of the law had taught him, that the law was too "holy, just, and good," for it to be possible that Israel should keep it. With forebodings of coming failure, true and faithful to the last, he set before them the majesty and fulness of the law's requirements, and the unsuspected dangers that lay in their weak and wayward hearts. *Lias.*—**For he is an holy God, a jealous God.** God is *holy* and consequently demands abstinence from sin. He is *jealous* and therefore exacts whole-hearted allegiance and unvarying fidelity. *Aldridge.*—"He is an holy God," or one who has no equal ; "a jealous God," who endures no rival ; "He will not forgive your transgressions," in giving to another the worship due solely to him. *Wells.*

20. Joshua, it would seem, both *saw* and *fore-saw* that idol-worship was and was to be the giant sin of Israel. How then could he die in peace without bearing his most emphatic testi-

mony against this sin? No wonder he accumulated the utmost force of appeal, of historic testimony, of earnest presentation, of solemn covenant, and of impressive memorial, to stem this anticipated and already apparent tendency to idols. How closely did he follow in the footsteps of Moses! How grandly did he fill the sphere God had assigned him! Now so near heaven, about to close a life so eventful, it is sad that his anticipations of the future of his people should be so shaded—but blessed to think that amid these painful apprehensions, he yet did his duty so fearlessly, so wisely, so well. H. C.

Joshua's warning turns mainly on two points,—the extent of the obligations which they were so lightly incurring, and the heavy penalties of their infraction. As to the former, the vow to "serve the Lord" had been made as he fears with small consideration of what it meant. In heathenism the "service" of a god is a mere matter of outward acts of so-called worship. There is absolutely no connection between religion and morality in idolatrous systems. The notion that the service of a god implies any duties in common life beyond ceremonial ones is wholly foreign to paganism in all its forms. The establishment of the opposite idea is wholly the consequence of revelation. So we need not wonder if the pagan conception of service was here in the minds of the vowing assembly. If we look at their vow, as recorded in verses 16–18, we see nothing in it which necessarily implies a loftier idea. Jehovah is their national God, who has fought and conquered for them, therefore they will "serve him." If we substitute Baal, or Chemosh, or Nebo, or Ra, for Jehovah, this is exactly what we read on Moabite stones and Assyrian tablets and Egyptian tombs. The reasons for the service and the service itself are both suspiciously external. We are not judging them more harshly than Joshua did; for he clearly was not satisfied with them, and the tone of his answer sufficiently shows what he thought wrong in them. Observe the points in the character of God on which he dwells, as indicating the points which were left out of view by the people, and as fitted to rectify their notions of service. First, he is holy. Joshua here urges the infinite distance between man and God, and especially the infinite moral distance, in order to enforce a profounder conception of what goes to God's service. A holy God cannot have impure worshippers. His service can be no mere ceremonial, but must be the bowing of the whole man before his majesty, the aspiration of the whole

man after his loftiness, the transformation of the whole man into the reflection of his purity, the approach of the unholy to the holy through a sacrifice which puts away sin. Further, he is "a jealous God." "Jealous" is an ugly word, with repulsive associations, and its application to God has sometimes been explained in ugly fashion. But, rightly looked at, what does it mean but that God desires our whole hearts for his own, and loves us so much and is so desirous to pour his love into us, that he will have no rivals in our love? The metaphor of marriage, which puts his love to men in the tenderest form, underlies this word, so harsh on the surface but so gracious at the core. There is abundant need still for Joshua's warning. We rejoice that it takes so little to be a Christian that the feeblest and simplest act of faith knits the soul to the all-forgiving Christ. But let us not forget that, on the other hand, it is hard to be a Christian indeed; for it means forsaking all that we have and loving God with all our powers. The measure of his love is the measure of his "jealousy," and he loves us no less than he did Israel. Unless our conceptions of his service are based upon our recognition of his holiness and demand for our all, we, too, "cannot serve the Lord." A. M.

There is a light and easy way of taking the vows of Christian service on the part of some, without considering very well what is required, or what may be the consequences to the name of Christ if they walk unworthy of it. Many profess Christianity with far more irreverence than some others keep aloof from it. The highest thing, indeed, is to advance to it deliberately and in humble reliance on the grace of God; but there are thoughtful and self-distrustful natures which have long and deep shrinking, because their eye has seen the purity of God and the poverty of self. Within certain limits the feeling is true, and most becoming. It is God repeating in a humble heart the words of Joshua: "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God." Ker.

Discouragements, rightly put, encourage. The best way to deepen and confirm good resolutions which have been too swiftly and inconsiderately formed, is to state very plainly all the difficulty of keeping them. There is no better way of turning a somewhat careless "we will" into a persistent "nay, but we *will*," than to interpose a "ye cannot." Joshua here is doing exactly what Jesus Christ did often. His very longing that men should follow him made him send them back to bethink themselves when they promised to do it. When once "great multi-

tudes" came to him he turned on them, with no invitation in his words, and told them the hard conditions of discipleship as being entire self-renunciation. They shall know the full difficulties and trials which they must meet; and if, knowing these, they still are willing to take his yoke upon them, then how exuberant and warm the welcome which he gives! There is a real danger that this side of the evangelist's work should be overlooked in the earnestness with which the other side is done. We cannot be too emphatic in our reiteration of Christ's call to all the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him, nor too confident in our assurance that whosoever comes will not be cast out; but we may be, and I fear often are, defective in our repetition of Christ's demand for entire surrender, and of his warning to intending disciples of what they are taking upon them. We shall repel no true seeker by duly emphasizing the difficulties of the Christian course. Perhaps if there were more plain speaking about them at the beginning, there would be fewer backsliders and dead professors with a name to live. A. M.

Obstacles thrown in the way of men who offer themselves to the service of God sift the true from the false seeker. No one will be able to complain of any real wrong from these obstacles. The false seeker is not injured, because he never sincerely sought at all. The true seeker is not injured, for never was such a one disappointed. Obstacles, too, lead the true seeker to examine himself more thoroughly. And it is good for a man that he should be compelled to examine himself both about his view of God's character in the pardon of sin, and what this requires of him in the way of self-surrender to God. God will beguile none of us into His service by false pretences. He tells us the nature of the work, what His own character gives Him a right to expect of us; then, if we still go forward, He can say, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord, to serve Him." Further, obstacles educate us to a higher growth and greater capacity for happiness. If we are to rise to anything great in the spiritual life, it must be by endurance of hardship and pressing on against repulse. The delay which Christians have in gaining a sense of acceptance with God arises often from making the sense of acceptance the main object of pursuit. But there is something higher: to serve God whether we have the sense of acceptance or no—to have this as the one great purpose of life and end of our being,—“Nay, but we will serve the Lord.” Ker.

22. Witnesses against yourselves.

It is still true of men that they are witnesses against themselves, as to their duty toward God now; and they will be all the witnesses needed in the day of judgment. Every sinner's conscience is a witness against his course. The principles on which business men must act as the condition of worldly success will witness against those who refuse to apply like principles to religion—principles which, if lived out, would lead them to be Christians. The fault-findings of men against good people show that these fault-finders know what is right, and are to blame if they do not live up to it. The principles on which good government in this world is based will justify God's moral dealings with men. The obedience which parents require of their children, the gratitude acknowledged to be due for favors received, the honor demanded for those to whom honor is due, will all witness to the justice of God's demand for our obedient and loving service. Our professions of religion are an abiding witness against us if we forsake God. Peloubet.

25. The service of God being thus made their deliberate choice, Joshua binds them to it by a *solemn covenant*. Moses had twice publicly ratified this covenant between God and Israel, at Mount Sinai, and in the plains of Moab. Joshua had likewise done it once (ch. 8 : 31), and now the second time. It is here called a *statute* and an *ordinance*, because of the strength and perpetuity of its obligation; and because even this covenant bound them to no more than what they were antecedently bound to by the Divine command. H.

26. This phrase, “The book of the law of God,” included the Pentateuch and whatever subsequent matter, like the account of this proceeding, it was important to put on permanent record for the use of future generations. Joshua made another memorial of this transaction—a great stone set up under an oak near the sanctuary of the Lord. H. C.—Moses and Joshua employed every expedient to secure a remembrance of God in the people's minds. They therefore marked the stations and stages in their progress with monumental circumstances and objects, connected in some express and memorable manner with the providential interferences of God, or his declarations, or with the people's conduct. Thus they marked places and times with monuments; built altars; raised heaps of stones (as at the passage of Jordan); set up single great stones, gave significant names to places; carefully preserved particular things as “the rod that budded” and a portion of the manna; and appointed periodical observances at

particular seasons. And they told the people expressly what each of these things was for ; so that *they* should be able to tell their posterity when they asked, "*What mean ye by these stones?*" And, doubtless, this "*great stone*" which was set up by Joshua did, in a measure, answer this end. Tens of thousands of eyes must have looked at it with the perception of its memorial meaning. *Foster.*—**27. This stone shall be a witness.** The words spoken in its presence were so joined to this transaction that every sight of the pillar would remind them of their obligations and promises. The eye and the ear of the people being both addressed, it was calculated to leave an indelible impression ; and, with spirits elevated by their brilliant victories in the land of promise, memory would often revert to the striking scene on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim and in the vale of Sychar. *Jamieson.*

Thus on the spot made sacred by so many ancient memories the people ended their wandering and homeless life, and passed into the possession of the inheritance, through the portal of this fresh acceptance of the covenant, proclaiming thereby that they held the land on condition of serving God, and writing their own sentence in case of unfaithfulness. It was the last act of the assembled people, and the crown and close of Joshua's career. A. M.—**Josh. 24 : 29 ; Ju. 2 : 8.** There was no more for Joshua to do. To the end of his heroic and spotless career he had "followed the Lord fully," and he could now contentedly "go the way of all the earth." He died as he lived, "the servant of the Lord." He was a hundred and ten years old—ten years short of his great master Moses—when God called his weary servant home. E. V.

His name, Jehoshua, "Jehovah is help," is the key to his life and work. Alike in bringing the people into Canaan, in his wars, and in the distribution of the land among the tribes—from the miraculous crossing of Jordan and taking of Jericho to his last address—he was the embodiment of his new name : "Jehovah is help !" So far also as the conquest and division of the land were concerned, his work was not complete, nor, indeed, *intended* to be complete. And this is characteristic of the whole Old Testament dispensation, that no period in its history sees its work completed, but only begun and pointing forward to another yet future, till at last all becomes complete in the "fulness of time" in Christ Jesus. Thus viewed, a fresh light is cast upon the name and history of Joshua. Assuredly Joshua did not give "*rest*" even to his own generation, far less to Israel as a nation.

It was rest begun, but not completed—a rest which even in its temporal aspect left so much unrest ; and as such it pointed to Christ. What the one Joshua could only begin, not really achieve, even in its outward typical aspect, pointed to and called for the other Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom and by whom all is reality and all is perfect and all is rest forever. And so also it was only after many years that *Oshea* became Joshua, while the name Joshua was given to our Lord by the angel before His birth. The first *became*, the second *was* Joshua. And so the name and the work of Joshua pointed forward to the fulness in Christ, alike by what it was and by what it was not, and this in entire accordance with the whole character and object of the Old Testament. A. E.

CHARACTER OF JOSHUA.

Joshua combined in a remarkable degree strategy for the conduct of war, and sagacity for the administration of civil affairs. He had also the moral courage to avow his dependence upon God, and to inculcate virtue and religion by precept and example. Having secured for his people a country by his arms, he did not seek to make himself king ; but, laying aside his command, he established a covenant or constitution by which they should be governed. J. P. T.—Joshua was the ruler of the people, yet he took no regal honors. He led them to victory, yet he received no exceptional reward. He quietly retired to private life when he had completed his great task. His is a grand example of unselfishness, simplicity, and humility. *Adeney.*

The character of Joshua is not only one of the finest in Scripture history, but one of the most remarkable that the world ever saw. We behold in him that rare combination of the highest qualities of the statesman and the warrior. We see that he is quite equal to every emergency under which he has to act ; and that he puts forth just that degree of power—just that degree of the qualities suited to the occasion. No care, no advantage, no duty is neglected by him. In the passage of the Jordan, in the judgment of Achan, in the siege of Ai, he forgot nothing which might tend to deepen the impression the miracle produced—nothing which might render the justice of the doom apparent—nothing by which the victory might be assured. The generation which he led was better and wiser than that which came forth from Egypt, and yielded to him a more willing obedience than Moses had obtained from their fathers. Toward the enemy alone was his countenance

terrible ; for, regarding himself as the minister of the Divine anathemas against a guilty people, he executed his awful commission with no shrinking hand ; but at the same time with calmness and without fury. His piety is, however, gentle, while his faith is impregnable, and his confidence in God unshaken. *Kit.*

We see him diligently and laboriously distributing the land among its new occupants, exhibiting the most scrupulous equity in his assignment of their portions to the several tribes. We watch him appeasing jealousies, calming rising feuds, checking arrogance, moderating overweening pretensions, and, with the magnanimity of real greatness and the calmness of conscious strength, executing in all its details the difficult task devolved upon him. And when the work of his life is done, and in extreme old age he gathers together the tribes, those whose fathers he had so often led to victory, to receive his parting commission, how full of dignity is the reticence he observes with regard to himself and his own exploits. All he had done is omitted, and the whole of the brilliant past is gathered up in one sentence, in which the entire glory is attributed to God : “ Jehovah, your God, is he that hath fought for you ; ” and the human agent does not appear at all. Let his people, for whom he had labored and fought, only be true to their covenant with their God, and Joshua would be content to be forgotten. *E. V.*—His lofty character, his chivalrous and trustful spirit, made a profound impression on the people whom he led and governed. His courage and his thorough devotion to the cause of God exerted the most beneficent influence on the whole congregation of Israel. In his farewell address to the people, when his work both of war and peace was done, he spoke not of conquest—the sound of the trumpet and the flash of the sword cannot be recognized in it—but of the holiness and the obedience which become the chosen of the Lord. *Moorehead.*—Grand man ! chosen because choice. Counted worthy at the first to stand nearest Moses at the giving of the Law ; proved worthy at the end to stand himself its mightiest vindicator. Standing also in history, a character which for its height is an inspiration rather than an example ; spotless as he was strong. As conqueror of nations, mighty ; as conqueror of self, sublime. *J. L. Chamberlain.*—A saintly and noble life truly, and one which teaches us the secret of success in the righteous war with evil. To obey, to be wholly consecrated to God, to believe in the fulfilment of the Divine promises, to fight fearlessly with eye fixed upon the Cap-

tain of our salvation, whose strength is perfected in weakness—this is the unfailing secret of success. *An.*

Josh. 24 : 31 ; Ju. 2 : 7. This bright period of Jewish history is crowned by the record that “ Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of Jehovah that He had done for Israel.” The lessons of the wilderness had not been lost upon them. Not in vain had they seen their fathers drop and die till they were all consumed for their rebellion. We search the sacred history in vain, from the Exodus to the Captivity, for another generation that was so wholly faithful to Jehovah. *P. S.*—As the faithful minister of Moses, as the servant of God, as the bold and believing spy, as the successor of Moses, as the captain of the hosts of Israel, as the conqueror of Canaan, as the type of the Lord Jesus, whose name he bore, Joshua holds a distinguished place among the great men of the sacred history. But in nothing is he more conspicuously great than in the *influence* which he exercised upon others by his authority and example. We learn here that his weight and influence with the Israelitish nation was such that for a period of not much less than half a century it sufficed to keep the fickle people steadfast in their allegiance to the God of their fathers. By his own influence while he lived, and after his death by the influence of those whom he had trained during his lifetime, the contagion of idolatry was checked, and the service of God maintained. *A. C. H.*

The Bones of Joseph Buried.

32. The bones of Joseph buried they in Shechem. Joseph’s death took place in Egypt about two hundred years before that of Joshua, and we learn (*Gen. 50 : 25 ; Ex. 13 : 19*), that prior to his decease he had given a strict charge that his bones should be conveyed away out of Egypt by his people when they themselves went up from thence. Accordingly they had carried these precious relics with them in all their wanderings through the wilderness, and never attempted to bury them till they were peaceably settled in the promised land. The act of sepulture, though here related *after* the account of the death of Joshua, undoubtedly took place *before* it. *Bush.*—The interment of Joseph’s remains most probably took place as soon as Shechem was in the possession of Israel. Nothing could more fully show the reverence in which the name of Joseph was held in Israel than this scrupulous fulfilment of his com-

mands, and the careful record of it in the history. This record is another link in the evidence which establishes the authenticity and early date of the Book of Joshua. *Lias.*

It was in great haste that the people of Israel left Egypt ; but they were careful to take with them the embalmed body of their honored Joseph. They reach the Red Sea, and pass safely through its waters ; they encounter many perils and live a pilgrim life in the peninsula of Sinai for forty years ; they cross the Jordan as they had crossed the Red Sea ; but in all these scenes and years they carry with them "the bones of Joseph." They have to fight their way through the land, and only after many battles and much time, do they become masters of Canaan. They have lost much and forgotten much. But Joseph's bones are in safe keeping, and there in Shechem, with Ebal and Gerizim looking down on the scene—there in the region with which the eyes of the living Joseph were familiar, whence he was taken away as a slave-boy hundreds of years before—there they laid these treasured bones in their resting-place. "By faith," we are told, "Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones." He believed that God would take Israel out of Egypt and give them Canaan for a possession. They were God's people, and that to Joseph's faith was everything. He would not be an Egyptian even while he ruled over Egyptians. He would be an Israelite, and would not let Egypt or Israel forget that he was, in life and in death. And with this purpose, "by faith he gave commandment concerning his bones." *Kennedy.*

33. And Eleazar died. Probably about the same time with Joshua. *In a hill* that pertained to *Phinehas*. As the cities assigned to the priests lay in the lots of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, neither father nor son could properly *inherit* a portion located in Mount Ephraim. But the probability is that the people voluntarily gave to the high priest a place of residence situated at a convenient distance from Joshua and the tabernacle, and that this was called the "hill of Phinehas," because he dwelt longer there than his father Eleazar had done. *Bush.*

Three graves. Such is the story of life. The end of it is always in some sepulchre. "They

buried Joshua." "They buried the bones of Joseph." "They buried Eleazar." So the land is taken in possession. Every grave becoming a stronger link, binding the people to each other and to the land God gave them. Look at these graves. And observe that while every life finds a grave, life does not end, but only takes a new departure from the grave. Death to the saints of God is only the promised "coming again" of Christ to "receive them unto himself." Nor does death end our usefulness. On the contrary, its touch canonizes. Death makes the neglected counsel and example the revered oracle ; and the despised creed the life-giving truth. There is something touching in these earliest graves of Israel—Machpelah, Shechem, Timnath, Mount Ephraim. Such graves were thrones, on each of which a great spirit ruled, teaching faith and truth and courage, spirituality and communion with God. The graves consecrated the land. *Grover.*

The great man dies, and yet the work goes on. The minister ceases, but the ministry proceeds. The individual sermon closes, but the everlasting Gospel never ceases its sweet and redeeming proclamations. And if we give the mind free range over all the noble and marvellous history of the world, we shall see that how great soever have been the men who have led us, the world could do without them. God knew how to supply their places, and amid all change and fear and dismay the purpose of Heaven went steadily forward in all the grandeur of its strength and all the tenderness of its beneficence. *J. P.*

At this early period in the history of mankind, fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, centuries before Greece and Rome had obtained a foothold in history, five hundred years before Homer sang, and one thousand years and more before Plato dreamed of his ideal Republic, when all Western Europe was an untrodden wilderness, the children of Israel, just emerged from centuries of bondage, not only recognized the guiding principles of civil and religious liberty, that "all men are created equal," that God and the laws are the only kings, but also established a free commonwealth under a written constitution, a government of and for the people. *O. Strauss.*

Section 219.

THE JUDGES AND THEIR TIMES. PARTIAL CONQUESTS BY THE NINE AND HALF TRIBES. REPROOF OF THE ANGEL JEHOVAH FOR THEIR DISOBEDIENT FAILURE. THEIR REPENTANCE AT BOCHIM. EPITOME OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

JUDGES 1 : 1-9, 16-36 ; 2 : 1-5, 11-23 ; 3 : 1-4.

1 AND it came to pass after the death of Joshua, that the children of Israel asked of the
2 LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And
3 the LORD said, Judah shall go up : behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And
Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against
4 the Canaanites ; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And
Judah went up ; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand : and
5 they smote of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek : and
6 they fought against him, and they smote the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek
fled ; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.
7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut
off, gathered *their meat* under my table : as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they
brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

Verses 8-36. *Partial Conquests by the Tribes on the west of Jordan of their several allotted territories. Of each tribe it is added, " he drave not out the Canaanites."*

2 1 And the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, I made you
to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers ;
2 and I said, I will never break my covenant with you : and ye shall make no covenant with the
inhabitants of this land ; ye shall break down their altars : but ye have not hearkened unto
3 my voice : why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from
before you ; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto
4 you. And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children
5 of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that
place Bochim [*Weepers*] : and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.
11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the
12 Baalim : and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, which brought them out of the
land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them,
13 and bowed themselves down unto them : and they provoked the LORD to anger. And they
14 forsook the LORD, and served Baal and the Ashtaroath. And the anger of the LORD was
kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and
he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer
15 stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against
them for evil, as the LORD had spoken, and as the LORD had sworn unto them : and they were
16 sore distressed. And the LORD raised up judges, which saved them out of the hand of those
17 that spoiled them. And yet they hearkened not unto their judges, for they went a whoring
after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them : they turned aside quickly out of the
way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of the LORD ; *but* they did not
18 so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and saved
them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge : for it repented the LORD be-
19 cause of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. But it came
to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their
fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them ; they ceased not
20 from their doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was kindled
against Israel ; and he said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant which I com-
21 manded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice ; I also will not henceforth
22 drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died : that by them
I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers

23 did keep it, or not. So the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily ; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

3 1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many
2 as had not known all the wars of Canaan ; only that the generations of the children of Israel
3 might know, to teach them war, at the least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof ; *namely*,
the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Zidonians, and the Hivites
4 that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath. And
they were for to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the com-
mandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

The Mosaic theocracy presents the peculiar phenomenon of being originally unprovided with a definite office for *executing* the power of the state. Jehovah Himself acts, as circumstances demand, in the immediate exercise of power, in order to execute His kingly will and to maintain the covenant law ; but for the rest, only the assurance is expressed (Nu. 27 : 16 f.) that Jehovah will not leave His congregation as a flock without a shepherd, but will always, again and again, appoint a leader over them and endow him with His Spirit, as He raised up Joshua in Moses' stead, and afterward the Judges. And the whole history of the people in the time of the Judges is to be understood only on the presupposition that there was no established executive power in the state. O. —The Book of Judges furnishes a striking picture of the disorders and dangers which prevailed in a republic without magistracy, when "the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways," when few prophets arose to control the people, and "every one did that which was right in his own eyes." It exhibits the contest of true religion with superstition, and represents the miseries and evil consequences of impiety ; affording a complete verification of the warnings and predictions of Moses, that the children of Israel should be prosperous or unfortunate according as they obeyed or violated the Divine commands. The whole period is distinguished by a display of extraordinary events, and by miraculous proofs of Divine interposition. The history of God's government must necessarily be characterized by the demonstrations of his immediate agency ; and the selected instrument of his will may well be expected to exhibit a succession of unprecedented exploits. *Bush.*

The Book of Judges is mainly a history of the troubled portion of the period ; and as in a storm-record we are expected to imagine for ourselves long intervals of sunny weather, so in this history we must make room for long intervals of peace and of freedom from oppression. The record, indeed, gives us to understand that the years of general prosperity far outnumbered

those of adversity. N. C. B. —By a superficial reader, the whole period under the Judges may be easily mistaken for an uninterrupted series of idolatries and crimes, from his not observing that the lapses which incurred punishment and the divine deliverances which attended repentance are related so fully as to occupy almost the whole narrative ; while long periods, when under the government of the Judges the people followed God and the land enjoyed peace, are passed over in a single verse, as productive of no events which required a particular detail. *Graves.*

The book is a mere register of diseases, from which, however, we have no right to conclude that there were no healthy men, much less that there were no healthy seasons ; when the book itself for the most part mentions only a few tribes in which the epidemic prevailed, and notices long periods during which it had universally ceased. *Jahn.* —To suppose that there was nothing during all the centuries covered by this book but an unbroken series of apostasies and judgments, would be as correct as to infer from a modern criminal calendar that there were none but law-breakers in the country. The writer selects of purpose those events in the history which taught the lesson that he wished to inculcate. W. H. G.

The servitudes occupy only 111 years ; the time of peaceful independence, 319 years, if we take the whole period as 430 years. The recurring phrase, "the land had rest 40—80—40—40 years," is another illustration of the general tranquillity which characterized the period of the Judges, notwithstanding the sad interruptions which occurred. Hence, in the coming millennial restoration of Israel, Jehovah promises (Is. 1 : 26, compare 32 : 1), "I will restore thy judges as at the first," namely, as in Israel's happiest days of the theocracy. A. R. F. —Under their government the nation enjoyed periods of repose, happiness, and plenty, of which the history of other ancient nations affords but few examples. E. C. W.

We see here two grand outstanding facts, one explaining the outer, the other the inner history

of Israel. As for the latter, we learn that ever since the sin of Peor idolatry had its hold upon the people. As for the outer history of Israel, we learn that the completion of their possession of Canaan was made dependent on their faithfulness to Jehovah. Side by side with these two facts there is yet a third, and that the most important: the unchanging faithfulness of the Lord, His unfailing pity and lovingkindness, according to which, when Israel was brought low and again turned to Him, He "raised them up judges, . . . and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge" (ch. 2 : 18). The exhibition of these three facts forms the subject-matter of Israel's history under the Judges, as clearly indicated here. Accordingly, we must not expect in the Book of Judges a complete or successive history of Israel, but rather the exhibition and development of those three grand facts. A. E.

The Hebrews in the Days of the Judges.

The Israelites were a nation of farmers, and each farmer was the proprietor of his own farm. The lands were adapted chiefly for grain, fruit, and pasture. Wheat, millet, barley, and beans were the principal kinds of grain; flax and cotton were also cultivated, and small garden herbs. The orchards were exceedingly productive. The olive, fig, pomegranate, vine, almond, and apple were all common; and a great part of the time of the Hebrews, in days of peace, must have been spent in cultivating these fruit-trees. As beasts of burden, they had the ox, the camel, and the ass; while sheep and goats constituted the staple of their flocks. Their grain harvest began about the beginning of our April and lasted for about two months. Summer followed in June and July, and was the season for gathering the garden fruits. The next two months were still warmer, so that the sheep-shearing would have to be overtaken before they set in. During all this time little or no rain falls in Palestine. October and November are the seed-time. "The former rain" falls now. December and January are the winter months, when frost and snow are not uncommon; February and March are also cold. "The latter rains" fall at this season.

The ordinary employments of the Hebrew farmer were ample and varied, but not very toilsome; and often they were pleasantly interrupted. Thrice a year the males went up to Shiloh, to the three great festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Each seventh day was a holy Sabbath to the Lord, devoted to rest and worship. At each new moon there was also

a holy day. The education of the children was chiefly in the hands of their parents, assisted by the Levites, who were scattered over the country, and paid from the tithes of the whole produce. On the whole, the Hebrews, in times of peace, led during this period a quiet, unambitious, country life. Occasionally, as in the song of Deborah, we meet with proofs that music and song and literary culture were not neglected. But on the whole, neither learning, mechanical arts, manufactures, commerce, nor the fine arts, were vigorously cultivated, or made much progress during this period. Each man was content to sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and the children of a family were usually quite pleased to divide the possessions, and follow the occupations of their fathers.

Points of Contemporary History.

In *Egypt*, the most magnificent temples, tombs, palaces, obelisks, statues, sphinxes, and other works of art, were executed during this period. In point of material glory, Egypt sat as a queen, with no one as yet to dispute her wonderful pre-eminence. Very little is known of *Assyria* and *Babylon* during this period. Babylon was now incorporated with the Assyrian empire, the great ruling power of Asia. The seat of empire was transferred to Nineveh, which was now rising toward the magnitude and magnificence of its palmy days. The *Phœnicians* appear to have advanced steadily in their commercial career. Tyre, founded by a colony from Sidon, which it soon eclipsed in glory, was built during this period. Of all the countries that begin during this period to loom in the horizon of history, the most interesting by far is Greece. There is no doubt that while the Judges were ruling Israel, there appeared in Greece a very remarkable people,—the Hellenes, from whom the country was called Hellas. For about two hundreds years Greece was filled with their exploits and adventures. They furnished the great mine from which the Greek poets drew their materials. W. G. B.

Rise of the Judges; Their Call and Functions.

The course of events during the four centuries preceding the time when Samuel filled the post of Judge, may be generally described as follows:—After Joshua, who had no immediate successor, and the other elders, who "had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel" (Josh. 24 : 31), had passed from the scene, the nation was left to itself, that its life might now be freely developed under theocratic institutions. So long as the remembrance

of the Divine manifestations survived, the people remained faithful to these institutions. Even the internal war against the tribe of Benjamin (ch. 19-21), which, occurring during the high-priesthood of Phinehas, must have been waged shortly after the death of Joshua, is an indication that the theocratic zeal of the nation had as yet suffered no diminution. This is, however, the last occasion for many years on which we meet with the united action of the whole people. For Joshua having committed the completion of the work of conquest to the individual tribes, it ceased to be the common concern of the nation. Some of the still remaining Canaanites were not subdued; against others the sentence of extermination was not strictly carried out. Those who were rendered merely tributary, and suffered to dwell among the Israelites, not only seduced the people to the service of Canaanitish gods, but also gradually regained the mastery in isolated parts of the land. Irruptions of great nomadic hordes of Midianites and Amalekites from the east ensued, while the nation was repeatedly exposed to danger from the hostile attacks of the neighboring Moabites and Ammonites. In the West, the power of the Philistine Pentapolis, situate on the low-lying plains near the Mediterranean, became increasingly formidable after the middle period of the Judges. The oppressions which the Israelites suffered at the hand of these different nations usually extended only to certain tribes; but this very circumstance was the reason why even these afflictions were not capable of drawing the tribes out of their isolation, and uniting them in a common enterprise.

In times of oppression like these (when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord), individual men—the *Judges*—arose, who, aroused by the Spirit of Jehovah, turned back the hearts of the people to their God, revived in them the remembrance of God's dealings with them in past times, and then broke the hostile yoke under which they were suffering. The aim of the narrative is not to extol these men as the heroes of the nation, but to show that the help afforded was the result of an outpouring of the Divine Spirit. These ministers of the theocracy were called *Shophetim* (judges). This name must not be restricted to the exercise of the judicial office, though its performance is asserted in the cases of Deborah, Eli, and Samuel. The word has a wider meaning, and represents these men as advocates of those Divine claims which it was their part to maintain and restore. The office of judge was neither permanent nor hereditary, but purely personal. Called to a prominent po-

sition by the necessities of the times, they acted with energy in the affairs of the individual tribes at the head of which they were placed, but exercised no abiding influence upon the nation, which, on the contrary, relapsed into its former course when its burdens were lightened or when the judge was dead. O.

The political as distinct from the spiritual character of the deliverance which they wrought, explains how God oftentimes gave help through men whose acts and spirituality are sometimes certainly not in accordance with the standard of the New Testament. And yet, for all that, they were, as the Epistle to the Hebrews notes, heroes of faith (Heb. 11: 32). This, first, because the public conduct and bearing of a man must manifestly be judged, not according to a standard yet far beyond view, but by a comparison with the men of his own time, and the standpoint of moral knowledge then attained. In truth, "the Judges" were representative Israelites,—representatives of their time and of the condition of their countrymen. Hence the reader will notice, together with the growing corruption of Israel, a decline in the characters of the judges from Othniel to Samson. And yet as it was needful that such deliverers should be raised up if Israel was not to perish, in part or in whole, so, on the other hand, could Divine help not be withheld, even although these "Judges" were only representative men of their own period. But in yet another and higher sense may "the Judges" be designated as heroes of faith. For however they differed, or in whatever respect they fell short of the absolute standard, all they did was undertaken and carried on in faith,—faith in Jehovah as the God of Israel, in his help in the past and in his direct presence with them, as well as in the future of Israel as the people of God. It was this faith which distinguished them from their contemporaries who had spiritually intermingled with the nations and the gods around them. A. E. — Their faith was limited, and acted but imperfectly on their moral nature; but it was true faith in the judgment of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Their work was rough and bloody, and they were rough tools, as such work needed; but it was God's work, and he had made them for his instruments, in the judgment of the Book of Judges. If we try to understand the reasons for such judgments, we may learn some useful lessons. A. M.

Among the causes of the great religious declension of Israel during the period of the Judges we may name, the example and social influence of the cultured, wealthy, and power-

ful Canaanites left in the land, or residing close upon its confines. Something may, perhaps, be due to the inexperience of the people in regard to the prodigious evils of idolatry. Another cause was, "fulness of bread;" the growth and development of self-indulgence—perhaps we may say, comparative luxury. This was foreseen and declared by Moses in his prophetic song (De. 32 : 13-18); in the words, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. *Then he forsook God who made him.*" Furthermore, it is quite apparent that both politically and religiously the mutual relation of the tribes to each other was far too loose for the best results. While the tribal feeling was strong, the national feeling was feeble, and greatly needed concentration. All through the period of the Judges, it was only under some powerful impulses that the whole national force could be brought to bear against any foreign enemy. H. C.

1-7. The history of the Judges is prefaced by some account of the efforts of the several tribes to drive out the heathen nations after the death of Joshua. In these efforts Judah took the lead, by the direction of God's oracle, and in association with Simeon. These two tribes gained a great victory over the Canaanites and Perizzites in Bezek, and took prisoner Adonibezek, one of those tyrants who have become famous for some special cruelty to their captives. He had cut off the thumbs and great toes of seventy kings, and amused himself with their attempts to pick up the food that fell from his table; and now, himself thus mutilated, he confessed that God had requited him justly. P. S. —To have imitated his cruelty, as a mere insult of the victors over the vanquished, would have been inconsistent with the law of the God of love. But to make him an example of God's retribution of sin in kind, was only a vindication of the majesty of the law of the God of justice. Maimed of his limbs, his own sin in maiming seventy others was brought to his remembrance; and he was led to confess, "As I have done, so God hath requited me." A. R. F. —He takes it in the sense of retribution. Hence he tacitly recognizes the justice of the punishment which had fallen upon him. It is a righteous and Divine requital. *Has'ings.*

18-36. The hill-towns were not what gave the Israelites their main difficulty in the occupation of the country. Wherever strength of arm and fleetness of foot availed, there those hardy warriors easily conquered. It was in the plains, where the horses and chariots of the Canaanites and Philistines had space to manœuvre, that they failed in dislodging the aborigines.

"Judah could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, neither could Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean nor Megiddo," in the plain of Esdraelon, "nor could Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer," on the maritime plain near Ramleh, "nor could Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho," "and the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley." Thus in this case the ordinary conditions of conquest were reversed—the conquerors took the hills, the conquered kept the plains. To a people so exclusive as the Jews there must have been a constant satisfaction in the elevation and inaccessibility of their highland regions. This is evident in every page of their literature, which is tinged throughout with a highland coloring. The "mountains" were to "bring peace," the "little hills, justice to the people:" when plenty came, the corn was to flourish on the "top of the mountains." In like manner the mountains were to be joyful before Jehovah when He came to judge His people. What gave its keenest sting to the Babylonian conquest was the consideration that the "mountains of Israel," the "ancient high places," were become a "prey and a derision;" while, on the other hand, one of the most joyful circumstances of the restoration is, that the mountains "shall yield their fruit as before, and be settled after their old estates." We have the testimony of the heathens that in their estimation Jehovah was the "God of the mountains," and they showed their appreciation of the fact by fighting, when possible, in the lowlands. P. S.

God is with His Church as He was with Judah. The Church has a divine commission to conquer the world for Christ, just as the Israelites had a commission from God to possess the land of Canaan. The power of the Church is divine, but it is also human. What man can do, he must do. If our part—man's part in the work or warfare of the Church, is properly executed, God's part will never fail. But, as the terror of the iron chariots of the enemy paralyzed the strength of Judah, so that the human part being wanting the victory was lost; so in the Church, if any cause supervenes to weaken or render ineffective the strength which God expects us to put forth, He will not depart from His plan or interpose to save us from the results of our own weakness, or to hide us from the scorn and derision of the world. W. M. Paxton.

27, 28. The world will not yield an inch to the man who is not resolute and courageous for God: nay, it will push him back, step by step,

from the ground which he had gained : for one compromise entails a second, and that a third, and so on, as Manasseh lost town after town. Attempt in faith great things for God, and then you may confidently expect great things from God. But if, forgetful of the honor of God whom you represent, you compromise religious principle, condoning the world's enmity to God in consideration of the earthly gain to the church, as the house of Joseph and Zebulun and Naphtali contented themselves with levying tribute from the Canaanites, your graces will languish, your lusts will revive, and the prince of this world will regain his hold. A. R. F.

These tribes could not or would not drive the Canaanites out, but they would make them tributaries. So the weak in faith compromise in respect to their Christian duties. They do not yield a bold, whole-hearted obedience at any cost, but they will go half-way, and stop. They will curb the flesh, but not crucify it ; they will follow Christ's directions up to a certain point, and then, like the young ruler, go away sorrowful. And this want of thoroughness is as fatal to the peace and comfort of a Christian's walk with God as was the compromise of the Israelites to their enjoyment of the promised land. The sins which they spare, the affections with which they compromise, the habits which they will not utterly break off, and the unfinished victories at which they stop short are continually marring their peace, and even threatening their hold on the kingdom of God. And the result is seen in the general condition of the Church of God : one of compromise instead of mastery, of hollow truce instead of decisive victory. A. C. H.

The Angel at Bochim.

2 : 1. The tribes were everywhere surrounded by a fringe of heathenism. In many parts, Israelites and heathens dwelt together, the varying proportions among them being indicated by such expressions as that the "Canaanites dwelt among" the Israelites, or else the reverse. Israel was settling down in this state, when their false rest was suddenly broken by the appearance among them of "the Angel of Jehovah." No Divine manifestation had been vouchsafed them since the Captain of Jehovah's host had stood before Joshua in the camp at Gilgal. And now, at the commencement of a new period, and that one of spiritual decay, He "came" from Gilgal to Bochim, not to announce the miraculous fall of a Jericho before the ark of Jehovah, but the continuance of the heathen power near

them in judgment upon their unfaithfulness and disobedience. A. E.

The Angel of the covenant ; the same that appeared to Joshua as *captain of the hosts of the Lord*, who was Christ himself. Who but God and Christ could say, *I made you to go up out of Egypt?* Joshua had lately admonished them to take heed of entangling themselves with the Canaanites, but they regarded not the words of a dying man ; the same warning therefore is here brought them by the living God himself, the Son of God appearing as an angel. If they slight his servants, surely they will reverence his Son. H.—As to the circumstance of his being said to "come up" from Gilgal, which is supposed to militate against this interpretation, it rather confirms it ; for it was in Gilgal, near to Jericho, that this same Divine person had appeared to Joshua as an armed warrior. Besides, at Gilgal the people had renewed the ordinance of circumcision and the passover, in which they had consecrated themselves to God afresh, and engaged to serve him as his redeemed people. In coming therefore as from Gilgal, the Angel upbraided them with their base ingratitude and reminded them of their solemn engagements. *Bush.*

3. "You will not drive them out," says God, "and therefore I will not ;" thus their sin was made their punishment. Thus they who indulge their lusts and corruptions, which they should mortify, forfeit the grace of God, and it is justly withdrawn from them. If we will not resist the devil, we cannot expect that God should tread him under our feet. Those that approach sin are justly left to themselves to fall into sin, and to perish in it. God often makes men's sin their punishment.

4. The persons to whom this sermon was preached were *all the children of Israel*. A great congregation for a great preacher ! The place is called *Bochim*, because it gained that name upon this occasion. All Israel need the reproof and warning here given, and therefore it is spoken to them all. H.

5. They sacrificed there unto the Lord. They had recourse to the blood of sprinkling for the remission of their sin. Though their weeping was very general and very bitter, so much so as to give a name to the place, yet they did not hope to pacify their offended God with tears. They knew that an atonement was necessary, and they therefore sought him in his appointed way. *Bush.*—The result was but transitory. The people wept and sacrificed unto the Lord. But no amendment ensued. Most true picture of the reception of the Word

of God in after-time. It is sensational or emotional religion against which Bochim is our warning. There are two principal elements of this fruitless sorrow. The first is want of depth of soul. The second is the "after revolt of the human mind against the supernatural." Godly sorrow issues in a repentance not to be repented of, in that thorough turning of the life to God's service, from which there is never a turning back to the way of evil again. *Bp. Woodford.*

11. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*, a phrase used seven times in Judges, to describe the seven apostasies of Israel to idolatry, which is the chief "evil," followed by the seven servitudes under Chushan Rishathaim, Eglon, Jabin, Midian, Abimelech, Ammon, the Philistines. The opposite phrase is to "do right in the eyes of the Lord." *A. R. F.*

11-23. This story has four chapters, repeated with dreary monotony over and over again. They are: Relapse into idolatry, retribution, respite and deliverance, and brief return to God. This miserable repetition of the same weary round of sin, punishment, respite, and renewed sin, sets in a strong light the two great wonders of man's obstinate persistency in unfaithfulness and sin, and of God's unwearied persistency in discipline and patient forgiveness. We can weary out all forbearance but his, which is endless. We weary him indeed, but we do not weary him out, with our iniquities. Man's sin stretches far; but God's patient love overlaps it. It lasts long; but God's love is eternal. It resists miracles of chastisement and love; but he does not cease his use of the rod and the staff. We can tire out all other forbearance, but not his. And however old and obstinate our rebellion, he waits to pardon, and smites but to heal. *A. M.*

It is difficult for us fairly to judge the immense strain required of the Israelites for resistance to the temptations of idolatry. The conception of one sole God was too high to be easily retained. A shrine without a deity seemed bare and empty. The law stringently bridled passions which the hideous worship of the Canaanites stimulated. No wonder that, when the first generation of the conquerors had passed away, their successors lapsed into the universal polytheism, with its attendant idolatry and immorality. Instead of thinking of the Israelites as monsters of ingratitude and backsliding, we come nearer the truth, and make a better use of the history, when we see in it a mirror which shows us our own image. The strong earthward pull is ever acting on us, and, unless God hold us up, we too shall slide downward. Idol-

atry and worldliness are persistent; for they are natural. Firm adherence to God is less common, because it goes against the strong forces, within and without, which bind us to earth. *A. M.*—The first of the Commandments is of all others the most difficult to obey. The dependence of the human mind on outward symbols, and then its tendency to identify the symbols with the conceptions they represent—these are the roots of all idolatry. The course of thought, in our own day, even among highly civilized and enlightened men, may well remind us how easy and how natural it is to lapse into systems of belief, which in their fundamental character are essentially creature-worship. So far from there being any difficulty in understanding how spiritual truth once known could ever be lost, all observation and experience prove that it is the most difficult of all things to maintain with even tolerable purity any high standard of faith. A thousand tendencies, from within and without, are perpetually at work to undermine or to transform it. And the awful correlations of human thought render it not only probable but inevitable that the first departures from the knowledge and love of truth must end in wider and wider divergence from it. The infinite subtlety and ingenuity of imagination will, when it is ignorant and corrupt, amply account for the origin and growth of even the most degraded superstitions. *Argyle.*

14. The terrible phrase, which recurs so often in the subsequent parts of the book, "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel," is no sign of a lower conception of God than the Gospel brings. Wrath is an integral part of love, when the lover is perfect righteousness and the loved are sinful. The most terrible anger is the anger of perfect gentleness, as expressed in that solemn paradox of the apostle of love, when he speaks of "the wrath of the Lamb." God was angry with Israel because he loved them, and desired their love, for their own good. The fact of his choice of the nation for his own and the intensity of his love were shown no less by the swift certainty with which suffering dogged sin, than by the blessings which crowned obedience. The account that follows ascribes all their miseries to God's direct act. He "delivered" them over, or, as the next clause says still more strongly, "sold" them to plunderers, who stripped them bare. Their defeats were the result of his having thus ceased to regard them as his. But though he had "sold" them, he had not done with them; for it was not only the foeman's hand that struck them, but God's "hand was against them," and its grip crushed

them. His judgments were not occasional, but continuous, and went with them whithersoever they went. Everything went wrong with them; there were no gleams breaking the black thunder-cloud. And the misery was the more miserable and awful because it had all been foretold, and in it God was but doing "as he had said" and sworn. It is a dreadful picture of the all-withering effect of God's anger,—a picture which is repeated in inmost verity in many an outwardly prosperous life to-day. A. M.

15. And they were sore distressed.

Nevertheless, these grievous afflictions were with a merciful design. They were not merely deserved punishments, they were fatherly chastisements. The severity was that of love, which laid upon them more than they could endure, and brought them into straits from which they could not extricate themselves, for the very purpose of bringing them back to him. W. H. G.

16. The Lord raised up judges. God raised up judges and kings and prophets, to deliver, to instruct, and to govern his people; and he gave them such aids of valor, prudence, knowledge, and such a degree of success as were sufficient for the purposes they were necessarily to answer; but he did not make them infallible or incapable of sinning; the judges often fell into errors and crimes; Samson abused his supernatural strength; as in after-times David's piety and virtue were overpowered by criminal desire acquiring an undue ascendancy; and Solomon, notwithstanding his extraordinary wisdom, was corrupted by sensuality and fell into idolatry. But this does not render it at all incredible that they were actually employed by God to effect his purposes, and were on particular occasions assisted with extraordinary aid. *Graves.*—In the days of the greatest degeneracy and distress of the church, there shall be some whom God will either *find* or *make* fit to redress its grievances and set things to rights. God must be acknowledged in the seasonable rising up of useful men for public service. He endues men with wisdom and courage, gives them hearts to act and venture. All that are in any way the blessings of their country must be looked upon as the gifts of God. Whom God calls, he will own and give them his presence; whom he raises up, he will be with. H.

18. It repented Jehovah because of their groaning. God has a tender pity for his suffering people, even when their suffering is the direct consequence of their own disobedience. He used alternately measures of severity and of kindness, that thus he might recall Israel to a sense of their duty and attach

them to his service. W. H. G.—This strong metaphorical ascription to him of human emotion simply implies that his action, which of necessity is the expression of his will, was changed. The will of the moment before had been to punish; the will of the next moment was to deliver, because their "groaning" showed that the punishment had done its work. But the two wills were one in ultimate purpose, and the two sets of acts were equally and harmoniously parts of one design. A. M.

19-23. The continuance of these nations was to be temporary, for a definite purpose and in mercy, while God pledged himself to aid and give complete and easy success to his people in their ultimate work of expulsion. But now the relation was completely changed. Israel had "transgressed" the "covenant" of Jehovah. Hence Jehovah could no more be on their side, nor fight for them. On the contrary, he would now allow these nations to remain, that "through them" he might "prove Israel" (verse 22). The presence of the Canaanites in the midst of Israel became, in point of fact, a continuous moral and spiritual test of Israel and of their religious condition. This places the wars of Israel with the Canaanites in an entirely new and spiritual light. It shows them to have been the test and the measure of their faithful allegiance to Jehovah and his service. Nor is this other lesson far to seek: that the promises of God and our own success are not bound to any mere outward performance—even of what is duty, but are connected with that inward and spiritual obedience and allegiance which are the outcome of real heart-service to God. A. E.—Israel had broken the covenant; God would not keep his promise. That involves a great principle as to all God's promises,—that they are all conditional, and voidable by men's failure to fulfil their conditions. Observe, too, that the punishment is the retention of the occasions of the sin. Is not that, too, a law of the Divine procedure to-day? Whips to scourge us are made of our pleasant vices. Sin is the punishment of sin. If we yield to some temptation, part of the avenging retribution is that the temptation abides by us, and has power over us. The Canaanites whom we have allowed to lead us astray will stay beside us when their power to seduce us is done, and will pull off their masks and show themselves for what they are, our spoilers and foes. A. M.

3: 1-4. Canaan, though conquered, was only partially subdued. Their armies had been defeated in battle, pursued, scattered, broken, and most of their strong cities captured and more or

less thoroughly destroyed ; yet still they remained in very considerable force in the country, holding some of their strong points of defence. Especially along the western border of Canaan, "the lords of the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Zidonians, the Hivites of Mount Lebanon" remained in great strength. It was of the Lord to leave some of their old enemies on the soil of Canaan in strength. God suffered these tribes of Philistia and Canaan to remain in sufficient strength to *prove Israel*, to try them and scourge them back from their apostasies. This is the reason which the Lord himself assigns. Hence this "Book of Judges" is little else than an alternation from prosperity to adversity, corresponding to the moral alternations of the people from obedience and penitence for their sin to transgression and apostasy. H. C.

Section 220.

MICAH, HIS HOUSE OF GOD AND HIS PRIEST. MIGRATION OF DANITES. THEIR THEFT OF MICAH'S GODS AND PRIEST. THEIR CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT IN LAISH, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF IDOLATRY.

JUDGES 17 : 1-13 ; 18 : 1-31.

17 1, 2 AND there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *pieces* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou didst utter a curse, and didst also speak it in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me ; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be my son of the LORD. And he restored the eleven hundred *pieces* of silver to his mother, and his mother said, I verily dedicate the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image : now 4 therefore I will restore it unto thee. And when he restored the money unto his mother, his mother took two hundred *pieces* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a 5 graven image and a molten image : and it was in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had an house of gods, and he made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, 6 who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel : every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who was a 8 Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city, out of Beth-lehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find *a place* : and he came to the hill country of Ephraim to 9 the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find *a* 10 *place*. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *pieces* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the 11 Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man ; and the young man was 12 unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became 13 his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

18 1 In those days there was no king in Israel : and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in ; for unto that day *their* inheritance had not fallen unto 2 them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their whole number, men of valor, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it ; and they said unto them, Go, search the land : and they came to the hill country of Ephraim, unto the house of Micah, and lodged there.

Verses 3-15 These five men talk with the Levite, go on to Laish, and return with favorable report. Whereupon six hundred Danites start on their raid, but stop at the suggestion of the five spies at Micah's house.

16 And the six hundred men girt with their weapons of war, who were of the children of 17 Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the

molten image : and the priest stood by the entering of the gate with the six hundred men girt
 18 with weapons of war. And when these went into Micah's house, and fetched the graven
 image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image, the priest said unto them, What
 19 do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go
 with us, and be to us a father and a priest : is it better for thee to be priest unto the house of
 20 one man, or to be priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad,
 and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the
 21 people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the goods
 22 before them. When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the
 23 houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And
 they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What
 24 aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my
 gods which I made, and the priest, and are gone away, and what have I more? and how then
 25 say ye unto me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice
 be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of
 26 thy household. And the children of Dan went their way : and when Micah saw that they
 27 were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house. And they took that which
 Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people quiet and
 28 secure, and smote them with the edge of the sword ; and they burnt the city with fire. And
 there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no dealings with any man ;
 and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob. And they built the city, and dwelt therein.
 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born
 30 unto Israel : howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. And the children of Dan set
 up for themselves the graven image : and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he
 and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.
 31 So they set them up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God
 was in Shiloh.

Chapters 17-21 relate events immediately succeeding Joshua's death, and antecedent to the appearance of the Judges. As no judge is mentioned in them, these narratives were placed at the end of the book. C. G. B.—They are a sort of appendix to the book, disconnected from the thread of its national history. All the other historic incidents were national in their character—successive chapters of national history. But these five concluding chapters are not primarily national, but rather are fragments of family history. It is generally held that their chronological place is quite early in the Book of Judges, even before the Judgeship of Othniel (3 : 9-11). It is every way probable that this migration of a part of the tribe of Dan to the extreme north of Palestine occurred soon after the allotment of the tribes, their original territory being found too limited. In the second of these narratives (20 : 28) we are told that Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before the ark as high priest in those days. But this Phinehas was in the vigor of his manhood (apparently) in the scenes recorded (Nu. 25), *i.e.*, before the death of Moses. His father's death is noticed in close connection with the death of Joshua (Josh. 24 : 33), showing that he came into the high priesthood at least as early as Joshua's death. The transactions of these last three

chapters of Judges must, therefore, be located in time very early among the events of this book. H. C.

Ch. 17, 18. The history comprehended in these chapters is obviously connected with ch. 1 : 34, where the reasons of the emigration of a part of the tribe of Dan to the northern quarter of Canaan are stated. "The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain ; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley." The consequence was, they sought a more enlarged inheritance, and while in the course of possessing themselves of this, the events here related, resulting in the establishment of idolatry in that tribe, occurred. *Bush.*

The story of Micah illustrates the way in which irregularities in worship sprung up. Micah was a young Ephraimite who had a liking for religious ceremonies, without genuine reverence for God. He set up a small establishment in his own house, consisting of a graven and a molten image, teraphim, or small images, and an ephod ; and first consecrated one of his sons as priest, but afterward hired a Levite for that office. Soon after being set up, this establishment was violently seized by a Danite colony of emigrants, and carried to their city in the extreme north of the country. It remained there for a long time, as a sort of rival to the taber-

nacle-establishment at Shiloh. It was at this place that king Jeroboam afterward set up one of his calves. Among the northern tribes it was productive of a great amount of evil. W. G. B.

Micah was evidently a devout believer in Jehovah. His one anxiety is to enjoy the favor of Jehovah (17 : 13) ; the formula of blessing used by his mother and his priest invokes the same awful name (2, 18 : 6) ; and yet so completely ignorant is he of the Law of Jehovah, that the mode which he adopts of honoring Him is to make a molten and a graven image, teraphim, or images of domestic gods, and to set up an unauthorized priesthood, first in his own family, and then in the person of a Levite not of the priestly line. The story also throws a light on the condition of the Levites. Here we have a Levite belonging to Bethlehem-judah, a town not allotted to his tribe ; wandering forth to take up his abode wherever he could find a residence ; undertaking the charge of Micah's idol-chapel ; and lastly, carrying off the property of his master and benefactor, and becoming the first priest to another system of false worship. The narrative gives us a vivid idea of the anarchy in which the country was placed, when "there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes," and shows how urgently necessary a central authority had become. A body of six hundred men completely armed, besides the train of their families and cattle, traverses the length and breadth of the land, not on any mission for the ruler or the nation, but simply for their private ends. Entirely disregarding the rights of private property, they burst in wherever they please along their route, and plundering the valuables and carrying off persons, reply to all remonstrances by taunts and threats. *Dic. B.*

4. The mother of Micah seems to have been in her way a devout woman. The scraping together eleven hundred shekels was probably not effected without considerable effort and self-denial, for it was a large sum, eleven times the yearly wages of the Levite. She meant to consecrate it to Jehovah, the God of Israel. She seems too to have been a good mother, for she intended this consecration to be for her son's benefit, and her language and conduct when her son confessed his guilt were pious and forgiving. And yet we find her disobeying the express command of God, and making a graven and a molten image to be used in his worship and service. In like manner we find Micah giving signs of a tender conscience and of the fear of God in confessing his sin when adjured according to the law ; we find him anxious for the

favor of God and looking to him to do him good ; we find him liberal and large-hearted in providing at his own expense for the worship of God ; and yet with a strange inconsistency we find him doing the very things which God's word forbade ; setting up images and teraphim and a superstitious ephod in a "house of God" of his own devising, and under a priest of his own consecration. A. C. H.

5. An house of gods. The Hebrew words should rather be translated, "a house of God ;" for his intention was to make at his own home an imitation of the house of God at Shiloh : still it is not improper to say "an house of gods," because to worship God by images was accounted the worshipping of other gods. To increase this resemblance to the true divine service, he caused priestly garments to be made, especially an ephod like that which the high priest wore, and teraphim or images, by means of which probably he thought he might consult God and consecrated one of his sons to be priest. *Bp. Patrick.*

9-11. This degenerate Levite was "content to dwell with the man," though his office was a perpetual insult to the true God, whose minister he was bound to be. His only concern was to secure for himself a transitory home. At best, he confesses, he comes but to "*sojourn.*" "The ministry is the best *calling*, but the worst *trade* in the world." A. R. F.

12. Consecrated the Levite. He thought that having a Levite in the house with him would of course entitle him to the Divine favor. Carnal hearts are apt to build too much upon their external privileges, and to conclude that God will certainly do them good because they are born of godly parents, dwell in praying families, are linked in society with those that are very good, and sit under a lively ministry ; whereas all this is but like having a Levite to be their priest, which amounts to no security at all that God will do them good, unless they be good themselves and make a good use of these advantages. H.—If only men keep clear of crimes against the law of the land, and offences against the laws of society, it is commonly supposed that sins of heart and life against God's holy law will not be strictly judged by God. As for the Christian law of loving, whole-hearted consecration to God, and crucifixion with Christ to the world, many men think as little of aiming toward such a standard as would a heathen. On the other hand, the element of Judaism largely enters into the world's religion, in its adherence to particular forms. A. R. F.

18:1. The tribe of the Danites.

Some families of it, to the number of six hundred men of war with their households. In consequence of their culpable remissness in expelling the old inhabitants, they lost the advantages they might otherwise have gained over them, and not only so, but as appears from Josh. 19:47, a part of their territories had actually been wrested out of their hands, leaving them so straitened for room that a portion of the tribe was induced to migrate to a distant section of the land in quest of ampler accommodations. *Bush.*

5. Ask counsel of God. By this it appears that they were as ignorant or regardless of true religion as the Levite and Micah, in thinking that God would answer them as well there as at his own tabernacle. *Wells.*—Had these Danites possessed the spirit of true Israelites, they would have been indignant to learn that a rival sanctuary to that of Shiloh had been set up, and that a renegade Levite had sacrilegiously assumed the functions of the sacred office. *Bush.*

13-19. The spies of Dan had been courteously entertained by Micah: thus they rewarded his hospitality. There is no trusting the honesty of idolaters: if they have once cast off the true God, whom will they respect? It seems Levites did not more want maintenance than Israel wanted Levites: here was a tribe of Israel without a spiritual guide. There needed small force to draw this Levite to change his charge; "Hold thy peace, and come, and be our father and priest." Here is no patience, but joy: he that was won with ten shekels may be lost with eleven: when maintenance and honor call him, he goes undriven; and rather steals himself away, than is stolen. *Bp. H.*

20. The priest's heart was glad.

Swayed wholly by self-interest and unmindful of the claims of gratitude and of truth, he forsakes his former employer merely from the motives of covetousness and ambition. But who can be surprised to find him false to men who has been convicted of the grossest perfidy toward God? *Bush.*

24. It was the old doctrine of "Might against Right," and suggests that the religion of these men was not embarrassed with ideas about rights of property, claims of justice, or bonds of social compact. Micah is stripped of both his priest and his gods: expostulates to no purpose, and is compelled to succumb before superior brute force. His expostulation is in pitiful tone, revealing a broken-hearted man: "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and

the priest, and ye are gone away; and *what have I more?* And now what mean ye to say unto me, *What aileth thee?*" But no heart was moved to pity by this sad wail. It is plain that his religious hopes have perished. He no longer "knows that the Lord will do him good." "Alas," he cries, "what have I more?" He must have been a very *sincere* idolater. *H. C.*

Micah's own words confute his folly—"My gods which I made:" "Those 'carpenters' chips,' as Mrs. Cotismore called them" (*Trapp*). How could those be gods which he himself made, after having turned his back on the God who made him? His title to them, as having made them, was undoubtedly good; but what good could he expect from such gods? Yet he cries, "Ye have taken them away—and what have I more?" *A. R. F.*—That creature or object which we place our happiness in, which we set our affections inordinately upon, and which we can by no means find in our hearts to part with, of which we say, "What have we more?" *that* we make an idol of. That is put in God's place and is a usurper, which we are concerned about as if our life and comfort, our hope and happiness and all, were bound up in it. *H.*

Henry truly says—"Their idolatry began in theft, a proper prologue for such an opera [rather *tragedy*]: in order to the breaking of the second commandment, they begin with the eighth, and take their neighbor's goods, to make them their gods." They could have made as good gods themselves; but superstition had invested Micah's idols with a false halo, so that they preferred to steal his, without inquiring into their origin. Holy life and righteous practice never really grow out of idolatry: its natural and necessary fruits are selfishness and corruption. Practice of holiness, purity, and truth can only flow from faith in the holy, pure, and true God,—that faith working by love to God and man. *A. R. F.*

27-31. I read this tragedy with feelings of indignation and abhorrence. True, these Phœnician dwellers in Laish were every way ripe for destruction. *They were lazy*, dwelling carelessly, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure. *They had nothing to do.* They had no business with any one. *They had no government and no moral character.* There was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything. They deserve little commiseration, no doubt, but then these Danites were thieves and robbers, "bitter and angry fellows," ready to run upon and murder poor Micah, whom they had plundered of his property. They were

also traitors to their religion and the God of their fathers. *Thompson.*

29. Called the name of the city Dan. To be a witness for them that they were Danites by birth, though removed to so great a distance from their brethren. As this fact might possibly in after times be called in question, they would make the very name of their place a ground on which to establish their claim to relationship. It was remarkable as one of the *extremities* of the promised land. The extent of the Israelitish territory from its northern to its southern border was generally expressed by the phrase, "From Dan to Beersheba." *Bush.*

The mound that marks the site of Dan (Laish), rising in the centre of the Huleh plain, is now called Tell el Kady (the hill of the judge), an Arabic translation of the old name Dan (the judge). The mound is an irregular cup-shaped oval, 300 yards long and 250 yards wide, elevated from twenty-five to thirty feet above the plain; the entire surface is covered with ruins, in which the plan of no single building can be traced. *Wilson.*—Nature's gifts are here poured forth in lavish profusion, but man has deserted it. Yet it would be difficult to find a more lovely situation than this, where "the men of Laish dwelt quiet and secure." *Tristram.*

30. The children of Dan set up the graven image. Thus was idolatry first publicly established in Israel. It began in the tribe and city of Dan, from which it gradually spread like an evil contagion, and though checked from time to time by pious rulers, yet it eventually infected nearly the whole nation. Having had the precedent now set, Jeroboam was encouraged afterward to establish the idolatrous worship of one of his golden calves at this very place. *Bush.*

Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh. The reading in the Vulgate, and in some ancient mss of the Septuagint, is the "son of Moses," instead of "son of Manasseh." This reading is confirmed by the Hebrew text itself, which has MSH., which is "Moses," and has written above those letters an N, which would make it read, "Manasseh." This N has been added by the Masoretes, who did not wish to have it appear that any of the descendants of Moses would act so badly. It is a lesson of sad and deep importance to see that the grandson of the marvellous "man of God" should be a leader of apostasy so soon after his grandfather had been God's chosen instrument to give Israel a pure and holy law, confirmed by the most stupendous miracles that men ever beheld. *Crosby.*

Until the day of the captivity. Some

have endeavored to frame an argument from this passage, that this book was written after the ten tribes were carried away by Salmaneser; but it is highly improbable that these images should have been suffered to continue so long, especially through the reign of David. It is therefore with the greatest reason concluded that by "the captivity of the land" is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and the carrying of it captive into the temple of Dagon (1 S. 4 : 11). This is confirmed by the next verse, which says that the images remained during the continuance of the ark and sanctuary at Shiloh; which continuance ended in Eli's time, when the ark was taken by the Philistines and never after carried back to Shiloh. *Patrick.*

It would not be easy to find a heathen family without a god in the household. In flight or disaster the parents and the gods are first cared for. But the trouble with very many professedly Christian homes is, there is no God anywhere about them from garret to cellar. They never recognize God in their every-day lives. No thanks are rendered, no gratitude expressed. The children are not taught to square their lives to the law of the Lord. There is nothing in the conversation that indicates that God has any place in the house. So that the house is worse than heathenish, it is godless. Children are born into such homes. Their physical and intellectual natures are cared for, but their spiritual faculties are allowed to shrivel unto death. Every earnest pastor will certainly respond that the most serious hindrance to a godly church is godless homes. It seems amazing sometimes how blank or meagre is the spiritual knowledge of the children of professed Christians. *An.*

Every attempt to substitute costly gifts, or gorgeous ceremonies, or showy processions, or lights, or music, or gestures, or anything bodily and sensuous, for the ritual of repentance, faith, fear, love, and self-consecration—consecration of the will and affections—to the service of Almighty God can only be made in ignorance of his character and mind as revealed to us in Holy Scripture. It is as truly superstitious as were Micah's images, and teraphim, and ephod, and house of God. Forms which tend merely to please the senses are worthless; forms which tend to soothe the conscience of the impenitent, and to stifle its questionings by creating a feeling of duty performed and of satisfaction made to God, are pernicious; and forms which so fill the thoughts as to the manner of performing

them as to leave no room for thoughts of God are injuries rather than benefits to the soul. Forms, again, which leave the soul self-satisfied, which convey a false impression of God's favor and grace being given when he is really displeased and offended, and which comfort and encourage those who ought to be trembling for fear of God's judgments, are manifestly destructive of the souls of those for whose benefit they purport to exist. Superstitious worship is compatible with vice, and with the dominion of sin in the heart. Superstition has no tendency to correct the principles of action, or to purify the thoughts and affections of the inner man. The sequel of Micah's history supplies a notable instance of this. The Danites, in their superstitious desire to possess the images of Micah's chapel, and the religious services of Micah's priest, scrupled not to break the commandments

of God by stealing, and, if need were, by committing murder. Superstition is no check upon the passions, and no bar to the reckless pursuit of what men deem to be their interests or know to be their desires. There is no gulf between superstitious worship and immoral conduct. The man who mistakes the aspect of God toward superstitious vanities is prone to mistake also his aspect toward moral disorder and sin. But he who really enters into the tabernacle of God, and communes with God in spirit, comes forth with his face shining with inward righteousness, the reflection of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. His life is a continuation of his prayers, his praise culminates in good works. In the interests of moral goodness, as well as for the honor of God, it is of supreme importance that the worship of the Almighty be free from superstition. A. C. H.

Section 221.

THE CRIME AT GIBEAH OF BENJAMIN. THE LEVITE'S APPEAL TO THE TRIBES. GATHERING OF TRIBES IN A GENERAL COURT. HEARING OF THE CASE, AND SUMMONS TO BENJAMIN TO DELIVER UP THE MURDERERS. A SCORNFUL ANSWER, FOLLOWED BY SERIES OF CONFLICTS WITH BENJAMIN. THE TRIBE EXTERMINATED, EXCEPT SIX HUNDRED MEN. MEASURES TO SECURE WIVES FOR THIS REMNANT.

JUDGES 19 : 1-30 ; 20 : 1-48 ; 21 : 1-25.

[The story is fully narrated in the comment.] The second episode recorded in chs. 19-21 appears, from 20 : 28, to have occurred in the time of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, which is also in the second generation after Moses and Aaron. The natural inference is that both these events recorded in the second portion of the book are to be referred in point of time to the earlier chapters of the first portion. They show us very plainly that after the death of Moses and Joshua there was a great relapse in the moral life of the nation. S. L.—They illustrate the lawlessness and confusion which ensued in a time when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. No part of the Bible forms such painful reading as this. Idolatry, impurity, and cruelty mark the period. D. F.—The decline of the national faith, and the dissolution of manners, were fearfully exemplified in certain other transactions which occurred before the time of the Judges. The crime of Benjamin was of a more cruel nature, and as directly op-

posite to the principles of the moral law as to the spirit of the national union. It led to a bloody civil war, and almost to the total annihilation of the guilty tribe. It is a history of bloody crime, wild justice, and still wilder mercy. *Milman*.

It is certainly not without a purpose that we have in Holy Scripture from time to time exhibitions of sin in its most repulsive and revolting forms. At the time of this history the community of Gibeah was sunk to the level of the vilest heathenism. Hospitality to strangers, though those strangers were their own flesh and blood, there was none ; pity for the homeless and weary, though one of them was a woman, there was none either ; respect for neighbors and fellow-townsmen, common decency and humanity, and every feeling which distinguishes a man from a wild beast or a devil, had wholly left their vile breasts, and, people of God as they were by privilege and covenant, they were in their abandonedness wholly the children of the

devil. The example thus recorded with unflinching truth is needed for every generation. Let the fear of God be once extinct in the human breast, and reverence for man and for a man's own nature will inevitably perish too. The spirit of man is fed by the Spirit of God. Extinguish the spiritual, and nothing of man remains but the corrupt flesh. It is in the cultivation of spiritual affections, in the constant strengthening of the moral sense, in steady resistance to the first beginnings of sin, and in steadfast cleaving to God, that man's safety lies. It is in the maintenance of religion that the safety of society consists. Without the fear of God man would soon become a devil, and earth would become a hell. A. C. H.

19 : 1. A Levite. It has been claimed that the Book of Judges knows nothing of the calling of the tribe of Levi, as appointed in the Pentateuch. On the contrary, it is a prominent and remarkable fact that the Levites appear in these incidents of the Book of Judges in exactly that position which Deuteronomy assumes, when it always classes them with the strangers on account of their poverty. The position occupied by the Levites both before and after the times of David would be quite inexplicable, if the law had not previously separated this tribe to the service of the sanctuary. O.—**A concubine.** A lawful but a secondary wife ; as in verse 3 he is expressly called her " husband," and verse 4 her father his father-in-law. Such connections were not disreputable in those times, being tolerated in the law and countenanced by the practice of the best of men. Bush.

13-15. Having passed by Jebus, which was about five or six miles from Bethlehem (the place whence they came), and not having daylight to bring them to Ramah, they stopped at Gibeah ; there they sat down in the street, nobody offering them a lodging. In these countries at that time there were no inns or public houses, in which travellers might have entertainment for their money ; but they carried entertainment along with them, as this Levite did here, and depended upon the courtesy and hospitality of the inhabitants for a lodging. H.

16-21. Gibeah was a second Sodom : even there also is another Lot ; which is therefore so much more hospitable to strangers, because himself was a stranger. This good old man of Gibeah came home late from his work in the fields : the sun was set ere he gave over ; and now, seeing this man a stranger, an Israelite, a Levite, about to take up his lodging in the street, he proffers him the kindness of his

house-room. But one man was at his work in all Gibeah ; the rest were quaffing and revelling. That one man ends his work with a charitable entertainment ; the other end their play in a brutish beastliness and violence. Bp. II.

22-25. Idolatry touched all the infirmities of the human heart. The splendid festival of the idol-worshipper veiled the most voluptuous practices, and initiated into the most infamous mysteries. The heart of the Israelite was of flesh, like that of other men. Idolatry was an appeal to his susceptibility of sensual impressions and pleasures. It offered a ready aliment to the secret and wavering passions of the rebellious Hebrews. Hence their frequent lapses into the vilest rites of their idolatrous neighbors, despite the clear proofs with which they had been favored of the unity and sovereignty of the Divine Being. That madness of debauchery, which was exhibited in the city of Gibeah, reveals the true source of so obstinate an attachment to the idolatry which consecrated such vices. E. C. W.

29, 30. To our ideas there is something peculiarly shocking in the procedure, but it was doubtless in accordance with the notions of the times, and as there was no supreme magistrate to whom to appeal for redress, it was probably the most effectual method of rousing the nation to take up the Levite's cause as one that concerned them all. The whole nation accordingly instantly understood it as a universal anathema, and entered into an indissoluble covenant to see justice done to the injured Levite. Bush.

20 : 1. From Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead. From the utmost borders of the land in every direction. By the land of Gilead is meant the trans-Jordanic region, where were planted the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. The convention seems not to have been summoned together by any superintending head, but by the consent and agreement, as it were, of one common heart, prompted by a holy zeal for the Lord of hosts and the honor of Israel. Bush.

The Levite appealed for retribution to the tribes in a general court, and they assembled at once in convention at Mizpeh, and heard the appeal to their justice. They carefully examined into the facts of the case. They found certain of the inhabitants of Gibeah guilty, not only of a violation of the rights of hospitality and humanity, but of a breach and violation of the common right of the tribes to a safe passage through the whole country. It was not so much an injury to any private persons, as to the tribes

of Ephraim and Judah to which the Levite and his wife belonged. It was an injury to all the tribes in common, since the case of Ephraim and Judah might become the case of any of them. No man in all Israel could have any security in travelling, if such open outrage and violence were suffered to go unpunished. But the tribes were independent of each other. Benjamin was a sovereign state. Neither Judah nor Ephraim could call the inhabitants of Gibeah to account. This was, therefore, a case calling for the interposition of the states-general. Yet even they could not proceed directly against the guilty parties. That would have been in derogation of the sovereignty of Benjamin. Therefore, having by investigation satisfied themselves of the facts in the case, they sent a summons to the tribe of Benjamin to deliver up the delinquents, that they might be dealt with according to law. Benjamin declined a compliance with this summons, and determined rather to dissolve the union of the states than submit to the will of the nation, though expressed in a deliberate, dispassionate, and constitutional manner. This changed the entire case. It was no longer the murder of a private person by some ill-disposed individuals of the city of Gibeah, but an open rebellion of the whole tribe of Benjamin. The authority of the national union was opposed and set at naught. The rest of the tribes declared them in a state of rebellion, and proceeded against them accordingly. E. C. W.

13. The children of Benjamin would not hearken. Thus in effect bringing the whole tribe to be partakers of the guilt of the men of Gibeah. By thus refusing to comply with the just and reasonable requisition of their brethren they virtually said, "We will stand by them in what they have done; nay, we would ourselves have acted the same part had we been present." It is difficult to conceive a case of more hardened and aggravated depravity than this. *Bush.*—Who would not have looked that the hands of Benjamin should have been first on Gibeah; and that they should have readily sent the heads of the offenders for a second service after the fragments of the concubine? But now instead of punishing the sin, they patronize the actors, and will rather die in resisting justice than live and prosper in furthering it! The abetting of evil is worse than the commission; this may be on infirmity, but that must be on resolution. Easy punishment is too much favor to sin; connivance is much worse; but the defence of it, and that unto blood, is intolerable. *Bp. II.*

14. It is impossible to suppose that the whole tribe of Benjamin really sympathized with the foul deed of the men of Gibeah. Had the men of Gibeah belonged to the tribe of Ephraim or Judah, the Benjamites would no doubt have been forward to join in their punishment. But because the offenders were Benjamites, immediately all these right feelings were stifled, and in their stead the one selfish feeling that Benjamin would be dishonored among the tribes, and that they themselves would be degraded in their fellow tribesmen's shame, was allowed to prevail. They were blind to what duty and self-interest alike required of them; and under the guidance of temper and stubborn pride, they rushed on to their own destruction, braving the wrath of a body nearly sixteen times as powerful as themselves, and withal tarnishing their own reputation by identifying themselves with the basest villainy. A. C. H.—Benjamin dared in arms to oppose both a righteous cause, which God Himself would espouse for the honor of His justice, and also vastly superior numbers. But God permitted Benjamin's infatuated obstinacy, so as to subserve His purpose of chastising Israel first by Benjamin, and then sorely judging Benjamin by Israel. A. R. F.

18. Which of us shall go up first. They do not ask whether they shall *go up at all*, which ought to have been their first inquiry. But confiding in the justness of their cause, they take it for granted that all is right in resorting to arms against their brethren, and merely inquire who should take the lead in the expedition. For wise reasons the Most High was pleased to leave them to learn at least their precipitance in this respect, by the event. He says in reply, not as our translation has it, "Judah (shall go up) first," but simply *Judah (is) in the precedency, i.e., "Judah has already been constituted leader of the tribes."* *Bush.*

19-25. It was more just that Israel should rise against Benjamin than that Benjamin should rise for Gibeah, by how much it is better to punish offenders than to shelter the offenders from punishment; and yet the wickedness of Benjamin sped better for the time than the honesty of Israel. Twice was the better part foiled by the less and worse: the good cause was sent back with shame; the evil returned with victory and triumph. They fought in a holy quarrel, but with confidence in themselves; for presuming of victory they ask of God, not what should be their success, but who should be their captain. Number and innocence made them too secure: it was just therefore with God to let them feel that even good zeal cannot bear

our presumption : and that victory lies not in the cause, but in the God that owns it. *Bp. H.*

22. They forgot that their own hands were not altogether clean, and that success does not always attend a multitude. They did not pray for success, as if all depended on God, nor did He promise it in answering them "Go up." When the Israelites, after their first failure, "encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array" in the same place as before, they evidently were acting under the influence of pique and wounded pride : they will on the same spot avenge their mortification and defeat, retrieve their credit, and humble their Benjamite brethren. They "encouraged themselves," but not in the Lord their God, as David did when greatly distressed ; their ground of confidence still was in the justice of their cause and the numbers of their army. They needed yet to be taught by one chastisement more to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. *A. R. F.*

23. Went up and wept before the Lord. All their arrangements for battle had been previously made (verse 22), and they seem now to have consulted God, as some consult the Scriptures, *to establish a previously formed opinion.* It was not to learn their duty, but to obtain sanction for a measure upon which they had *already* resolved. They should have deferred making preparations till after they had made their confession and taken counsel. Their tears and lamentations under these circumstances did not secure them from defeat ; and as in their self-confidence they made no inquiry as to success, nor invoked assistance, God gave them no promise on that score. *Bush.*

The eleven tribes went, not at God's *command*,—certainly not as regards the color and quality of the execution of the command,—but rather with his *permission.* Go and fall, forty thousand of you, before the faces of your guilty brethren ; find your own passion checked : be humbled first yourselves, and then let the proud, the obstinate, the guilty, perish at your hand. You and they are—almost—alike guilty, in my sight. *Herrick.*

26-28. But God having showed them that he was under no obligation to succeed their enterprise, that he neither needed them nor was tied to them, that they were more indebted to him for the honor of being ministers of his justice than he to them for the service, now they became humble petitioners for success. Before, they only consulted God's oracle, *Who shall go up first ? And, Shall we go up ?* But now they implored his favor, fasted and prayed, and offered

burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, to make an atonement for sin, and an acknowledgment of their dependence upon God, as an expression of their desire toward him. And when they were in this frame and thus sought the Lord, then he not only ordered them to go up against the Benjamites the third time, but gave them a promise of victory, *To-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.* *H.*

35. The Lord smote. In this verse the sacred writer relates the event of the battle in general terms. In the sequel he resumes the story, giving the particulars of the battle, and the consequences of the victory more in detail. *Bush.*

48. The Benjamites were smitten with the edge of the sword, and all their cities were set on fire. All this fearful catastrophe sprang from one sin, perpetrated by one city, which was screened from punishment by its fellows. *A. R. F.*—So that of all the tribe of Benjamin there remained none alive but six hundred men that took shelter in the rock Rimmon, and lay close there four months (verse 47). This affair of Gibeah is twice spoken of by the prophet Hosea, as the beginning of the corruption of Israel, and a pattern to all that followed (ch. 9 : 9), *They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah*, and ch. 10 : 9, *Thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah*, and it is added, that *the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not*, that is, did not *at first*, overtake them. *H.*

21 : 1. A circumstance not mentioned before is now brought forward, as is another in verse 5, on which the events about to be narrated in this chapter depend, viz., that the men of Israel had taken two solemn oaths at Mizpeh (ch. 20 : 1)—the one that no Israelite would give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite ; the other that whosoever did not come up to the national assembly there should be put to death. *A. C. H.*

2-4. They *lifted up their voices and wept sore*, for the entire destruction of one whole tribe ; for this was the complaint they poured out before God, *There is one tribe lacking.* God had taken care of every tribe ; their number twelve was that which they were known by ; every tribe had his station appointed in the camp, and his stone in the high priest's breastplate ; every tribe had his blessing, both from Jacob and Moses ; and it would be an intolerable reproach to them if they should lose one out of twelve ; especially Benjamin, the youngest, who was particularly dear to Jacob, their common ancestor, and whom all the rest ought to have been in a particular manner tender of. In this trouble they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to give

thanks for their victory, and also to atone for their own folly in the pursuit of it and to implore the Divine favor in their present strait. H.

Cruel Measures Taken to Provide Wives for the Remnant of Benjamites: 1. By the Massacre at Jabesh-Gilead; 2. By the Seizure of Two Hundred Maidens at Shiloh.

Ch. 21 : 5-23.

Jabesh-Gilead was a city of the half-tribe of Manasseh, east of Jordan, situated on a hill near Mount Gilead, about fifteen miles east of Jordan, and about an equal distance south of Gadara. It was not far from the lake of Gennesaret. *Bush.*—The massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead was a cruel expedient to extricate the Israelites from a difficulty, in which their superstitious observance of an unlawful oath had involved them; and is a sad instance of the iniquity and barbarity of the times. *Stackhouse.*—The indiscriminate massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, and the rape of the virgins at Shiloh, were certainly stamped with marks of injustice and cruelty; and must be condemned on those principles which the Scriptures have elsewhere furnished, though in the brevity of the sacred history they are recorded without comment. *Gray.*—So ends this sad history of sin, shame, sorrow, and slaughter. The providence of God alone, working in connection with His everlasting covenant, saved for better times Israel from the utter destruction which Israel's own corruption deserved and otherwise must have entailed. A. R. F.

23-25. In the close of all, we have (1), The settling of the tribe of Benjamin again. The few that remained returned to the inheritance of that tribe. And soon after, from among them sprang Ehud, who was famous in his generation, the second judge of Israel. (2) The disbanding and dispersing of the army of Israel (verse 24). They did not set up for a standing army, nor pretend to make any alterations or establishments in the government; but when the affair was over for which they were called together, they quietly departed in God's peace every man to his family. (3) A repetition of the cause of these confusions (verse 25). Though God was their King, every man would be his own master. H.

The Benjamites returned to their inheritance, and repaired their cities. They regained something of their old martial fame, and gave Israel its second judge, Ehud, and its first king, Saul, the son of Kish; but they never recovered from this terrible blow. After hesitating between the

two powerful tribes whose territories they parted, and ranging themselves at first on the side of Ephraim, they at last subsided, like the Simeonites, into a position entirely subordinate to Judah, and their territory was absorbed in Judea. P. S.

We have a striking evidence of the truthfulness and impartiality of the narrator in this merciless exposure of the sins and misdeeds of his countrymen. No fewer than four times does he impress upon the mind of his readers the fact that in the days when these shameful deeds were done "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The lesson here conveyed is the absolute necessity, for the religious and civil welfare of a people, that a firm government should exist, to control by the force of law the excesses of individual will, and to compel within certain limits the action of individuals for the sake of the public good. Law, like the eye of God, is impartial in its look-out; its end is to produce order, harmony, and peace. Under the even reign of law eccentric violence is unknown, and its steady but irresistible pressure gives consistency and strength to the whole fabric of society. Under its reign full scope is given to every energy for good, and all the scattered forces of the separate parts are concentrated for the benefit of the whole. Under its wholesome restraints the selfish passions of man are not allowed to injure themselves or others, and the folly of the foolish and the wickedness of the wicked are checked in their injurious courses. Not that which is right in his own eyes, and which self-will desires, but that which the law, the reflection of God's mind, commands, is the rule by which every man's actions must be squared. The perfection of a human polity is one in which wise laws govern the whole social movement as surely as the laws of nature govern the material world. It is the interest of all classes of the community to bow to this supremacy of law, and to unite in a firm compact to support the central authority in repressing every act of lawlessness, whether committed by an individual or by a company. It is only thus that social chaos can be avoided, and that civil cosmos, which alone is civilization, can be maintained for the true liberty and welfare of mankind. A. C. H.

We must guard, however, against the impression that such scenes as these describe the whole, or even the chief part, of the history of Israel under the Judges. In the book itself, the intervals during which "the land had rest"

make up a large aggregate of years, though we are apt to overlook them from the brevity of each notice. These hints are in some degree filled up to a finished picture, in the exquisite scenes of rural tranquillity set before us in the Book of *Ruth*. The events there related are merely said to have happened "in the time of the Judges;" but from the genealogies we gather that they fell in the generation after the troubles above related. P. S. —At best the Mosaic system could have had only a feeble influence and a very limited observance. With the develop-

ments of the Book of Judges fully in our mind we can understand why David, of spirit so devout and with views of the national character and national want so broad and discriminating, should, on coming to the throne, feel the necessity of making a religious capital powerful and imposing as a home for the ark of the covenant, and of investing the entire Mosaic worship with the richest attractions of ceremonial and song. There was, doubtless, a most imperative need for that re-enforcement to the power of the religious institutions of Moses. H. C.

Section 222.

DELIVERANCES BY OTHNIEL, EHUD, AND SHAMGAR.

JUDGES 3 : 5-31.

5 AND the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites ; the Hittite, and the Amorite, and
6 the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite : and they took their daughters to be their
7 wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of
Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and
8 served the Baalim and the Asheroth. Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against
Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia : and the
9 children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. And when the children of Israel cried
unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, even
10 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the spirit of the LORD came upon
him, and he judged Israel ; and he went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-rishathaim
11 king of Mesopotamia into his hand : and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim. And
the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.
12 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD : and the
LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done that which
13 was evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and
14 Amalek ; and he went and smote Israel, and they possessed the city of palm trees. And the
15 children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when the children of
Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a saviour, Ehud the son of Gera, the
Benjamite, a man lefthanded : and the children of Israel sent a present by him unto Eglon the
16 king of Moab. And Ehud made him a sword which had two edges, of a cubit length ; and he
17 girded it under his raiment upon his right thigh. And he offered the present unto Eglon king
18 of Moab : now Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made an end of offering the
19 present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he himself turned back from the
quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king. And he said,
20 Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him ; and
he was sitting by himself alone in his summer parlor. And Ehud said, I have a message from
21 God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took
22 the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly : and the haft also went in after the
blade ; and the fat closed upon the blade, for he drew not the sword out of his belly ; and it
23 came out behind. Then Ehud went forth into the porch, and shut the doors of the parlor
24 upon him, and locked them. Now when he was gone out, his servants came ; and they saw,
and, behold, the doors of the parlor were locked ; and they said, Surely he covereth his feet
25 in his summer chamber. And they tarried till they were ashamed : and, behold, he opened
not the doors of the parlor ; therefore they took the key, and opened *them* : and, behold,

26 their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and
27 passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirah. And it came to pass, when he was
come, that he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went
28 down with him from the hill country, and he before them. And he said unto them, Follow
after me : for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they
went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan against the Moabites, and suffered not a
29 man to pass over. And they smote of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, every lusty
30 man, and every man of valor ; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day
under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.
31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which smote of the Philistines six hundred
men with an ox goad : and he also saved Israel.

There are six conquests and redemptions of Israel :

Oppressors.	Deliverers.
1. Mesopotamians.	Othniel.
2. Moabites.	Ehud.
3. North Canaanites.	Deborah and Barak.
4. Midianites, etc.	Gideon.
5. Ammonites.	Jephthah.
6. Philistines.	Samson.

D. F.

If any doubts could have been felt that the command utterly to drive out the Canaanite, though apparently harsh, was right in itself, the events which now ensued alone suffice to remove them. Again, as before the flood, the seed of the wicked were intermingled with the heirs of the promise, and with like results. *Lee.* — The first step in Israel's declension was failure to exterminate the Canaanites, in accordance with God's command. This entailed the compromise of living among them and maintaining intercourse with them. Then followed intermarriages, that prolific source of degeneracy in all ages. Their not throwing down the altars of the Canaanites soon issued in their bowing down to the gods worshipped at those altars. *A. R. F.*

No sooner was that shameful alliance contracted than the national apostasy followed instantly. And the connection between this religious apostasy and the first servitude by which they lost their national independence was no less close. If we read Scripture with a view to our own admonition, our attention must be arrested by this striking example of the danger of ungodly unions. It must be so in the nature of things. The true notion of the partnership of marriage is a fellowship in heart, in thought, in affection, in interest ; an identity of aim and purpose in life ; a joint action in all that relates to God and man ; united counsels in fulfilling the various duties of the home, of the human society, of the Church of God. How could the Israelite, seeking the glory of Jehovah, and hating the detestable abominations of heathenism, have such fellowship with the daughter of an Amorite or Canaanite ? And how can any true servant of the

Lord Jesus Christ have such fellowship with one whose heart is wholly given up to the world, and has no concern for the kingdom of heaven ?

8. The sacred history teaches us how the movements of the nations and the restless invasions of heathen kings had a special relation to the chosen race. They were actuated merely by ambition, by the lust of conquest, by the appetite for plunder and dominion. But in the wonderful providence of God they were made instruments for chastening and correcting, or for saving and delivering, his people, as the case might be. Here we find the unsettled state of the Mesopotamian tribes, which led them beyond the borders of their own land, bringing them to Palestine at the very time when the Israelites in the wantonness of their fickle hearts had fallen away from the service of the living and true God to that of the idols of Canaan. A little while and their apostasy would have been complete, and the very end of their election would have failed. So Cushan-rishathaim, who knew nothing of their religion or of their apostasy, mustered his hosts, marched his army, and at the critical moment fell like a rod upon the peccant people. *A. C. H.*

9. Cried unto the Lord. It seems a most remarkable circumstance in the various Jewish apostasies that it was only in their prosperity the Mosaic Law was neglected and violated ; in adversity, when reflection was awakened and seriousness restored, they always cried to their God as the only sure source of deliverance, and as uniformly received the deliverance they sought. Surely this can be accounted for only on the supposition that the Mosaic Law was really dictated by a Divine authority, and continually supported by a Divine interposition. *Graves.* — From the circumstance of the Israelites being most prone to idolatry in prosperous times, and generally returning to the God of their fathers at the season of adversity, we are supplied with a clear proof that their defection from the true God was not any doubt of his goodness or power, but a wanton abuse of his

blessings. If they had doubted the truth and divine authority of their law, their behavior would have been naturally otherwise; they would have adhered to it in times of prosperity, and would have left it in adversity and trouble. *Wurburton.*

9. The first judge was Othniel, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb. He was raised up in his capacity of deliverer in answer to their prayer, and was prepared for his office of judge by the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him. It is remarkable that Israel's first enemies after the occupation of Canaan arose in the same quarter as those who overthrew the monarchy—viz., in the land of the northeast, in the country washed by the Tigris and Euphrates. Othniel was of the tribe of Judah, and his exploits served to keep in memory the blessing of Jacob upon Judah, as well as to illustrate the Divine injunction which had before been given, "Judah shall go up first." *Leathes.*—Othniel had already signalized his valor in the taking of Kirjath-sepher and by his experience in war, and the reputation he had gained with his countrymen was peculiarly qualified to lead them successfully against their oppressors. *Bush.*

10. The Spirit of Jehovah was upon him. For the first time in the Book of Judges we meet here the statement, that "the Spirit of Jehovah" "was upon," or "clothed," or else "came upon" a person. Although, in each case, the influence came from the Spirit of God for the accomplishment of a special purpose, it was *not* necessarily, as under the New Testament dispensation, a sanctifying influence. Nor is this influence to be regarded as the same with the *abiding* presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart. These gifts of the Holy Spirit were *miraculous*, rather than *gracious*—like the gifts in the early Church, rather than as "the promise of the Father." *A. E.*

Their cry of distress entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. His wrath turned to pity; he who chastened when they sinned, now comforted when they prayed. Othniel the deliverer went forth in the might of God's Spirit, and Chushan's power was gone, and the land of Israel had rest for forty years. And so has it ever been. The obscurer movements of Philistines, and Ammonites, and Midianites, as well as the grand historic drama of Assyria, and Egypt, and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome, have always had one special design in the correction or deliverance of God's people. And we may be sure that the great events of modern history have been appointed to work out the purposes of God with reference to his Church,

either for correction or deliverance, and that the rise and fall of empires, the ambition of kings and statesmen, the conquests of warriors, and the revolutions of peoples, will in the end be found to have been overruled for the glory of God, and for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus our Lord. *A. C. H.*

SECOND SERVITUDE, UNDER THE MOABITES.

Verses 12-30.

12. As every man is guilty of his own sorrow, these Israelites bred mischief to themselves. Rather than Israel shall want a scourge for their sin, God himself shall raise them up an enemy. Moab had no quarrel but his own ambition; but God meant by the ambition of the one party, to punish the ambition of the other; his justice can make one sin the executioner of another, while neither shall look for any measure from him but judgment. *Bp. H.*

13. Possessed the city of palm-trees. Jericho, or rather the site of Jericho, with the adjacent territory, as the city itself was in ruins. On this site, Eglon probably pitched his camp, erected fortifications, and fixed here his residence. His object was to obtain command of the fords of the Jordan, which would not only open to him a free communication with the land of Moab, but prevent also the tribes on the east and the west of the river forming a junction of forces. Accordingly the first step taken by Ehud, when assured of victory (verse 28), was to take possession of these fords, and thus cut off the retreat of the enemy. *Bush.*

14. No less than eighteen years did the rod of Moab rest upon the inheritance of God. Israel's sins have made them servants, whom the choice of God had made free, yea, his first-born. Worthy are they to serve those men whose false gods they had served. **15.** Doubtless, Israel complained sooner than the end of eighteen years. Before they sighed for themselves, but now they cried unto God. The very purpose of affliction is to make us importunate. When once we can say, "Out of the depths have I cried to thee," instantly follows, "The Lord heard me." We live in bondage to these spiritual Moabites, our own corruptions: it discontents us; but where are our strong cries unto the God of heaven? Where are our tears? If we could passionately bemoan ourselves to him, how soon should we be more than conquerors! The same hand that raised up Eglon against Israel, raised up also Ehud for Israel against Eglon. When that tyrant had revenged God of his people, God will revenge his people of him. *Bp. H.*

The story of Ehud throws a broader light over the darkness of the time. The Moabite armies, the most civilized of the Transjordanic nations, place themselves at the head of the more nomadic tribes of Ammon and Amalek, cross the Jordan, and (like the Israelites on their first passage) establish themselves at Gilgal and Jericho. Their dominion extended itself over the neighboring tribe of Benjamin, and from Benjamin, accordingly, a yearly tribute was exacted. There was in the tribe a youth of the name of Ehud, who was intrusted with the charge of carrying the tribute to the Moabite fortress. After he had delivered the gifts, he paid a visit to the sacred enclosure or "images" at Gilgal, left his two attendants, and returned, with his increased knowledge of the localities, to the presence of the king. The whole scene is full of the contrast between the slight, wily, agile Israelite, and the corpulent, credulous, unwieldy Moabite. The king is seated in a chamber on the roof of the house for the sake of catching a cool air in the sultry atmosphere of the Jordan valley, with his attendants around him. Ehud announces that he has a secret oracle to disclose. The king, with an instantaneous "Hush!" orders his attendants to withdraw. Ehud, still fearing lest his blow should miss its aim, repeats the announcement of the Divine message. This was to raise the king from his sitting posture, and expose him to the stroke more easily. Eglon falls into the snare. With the respect always paid in the East to a sacred personage, he rises and comes toward the assassin. In that moment, from the long mantle, which as the leader of the tribe he wore round him, Ehud, left-handed like so many of his tribesmen, drew the long dagger concealed on his right thigh. Its flash is seen for an instant, before the flesh of the portly king closes in upon it. Ehud escapes by the gallery round the roof, locking the door behind him. *Stanley.*

The horror and confusion consequent upon the discovery of the murder have given Ehud still further time. And now the preconcerted signal is heard. The shrill blast of the trumpet wakes the echoes of Mount Ephraim. All around from their hiding troop the men of Israel. The first object is to haste back toward Jericho and take the fords of Jordan, so as to allow neither help to come, nor fugitives to escape; the next to destroy the garrison of Moab. In both, Israel are successful, and, "at that time"—of course, not on that precise day—ten thousand of Moab are slain, all of them, as we should say, fine men and brave soldiers. "And the land had rest fourscore years." Not

one word of palliation or excuse is said for this deed. It was *not* under the influence of "the Spirit of Jehovah" that such deliverance was wrought, nor is it said of Ehud, as of Othniel, that he "judged Israel." Even Jewish tradition compares Ehud to the "ravening wolf," which had been the early emblem of his tribe, Benjamin. A. E.

Treacherous assassination is not a work emanating from the Spirit of God. Ehud's courage, patriotism, and faith were accepted of God, but not what was wrong in his action. But God blots out the sin which alloys even the acts of faith of His children. God employed Ehud to be Israel's deliverer: and overruled his wrong act to carry out the Divine purpose against Eglon. Bishop Butler observes, there are some precepts in Scripture given to particular persons which would be immoral and vicious, were it not for such precepts; but those are of such a kind that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action. None of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded to cultivate the principles, and act from principles of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty, the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action in any of these instances. In Ehud's instance, neither the principle nor the particular act was commanded by God. It is not said of Ehud, as it was of Othniel, that "the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him." Nor does Ehud appear among the examples of faith in Heb. 11. A. R. F.

The cruelty of our penal laws down to the present century, the existence of the slave-trade and of slavery within our own memory, persecution unto cruel deaths for religious opinions, the severities of arbitrary governments till exploded in the light of freedom, are familiar examples how things evil in themselves may be approved by good and humane men when they are sanctioned by prevalent custom and by public opinion. And the observation of these facts teaches us the folly as well as the injustice of judging men of one age by the standard of another. Turning to Ehud and Jael, we know that in their days human life had no value; that the life of an enemy was looked upon as a lawful prey. We know that the only weapon of defence that remains to the weak, that of cunning and deceit, becomes sharpened by constant use. When, therefore, Ehud and Jael in their respective times saw the people of God whom they loved trampled underfoot by cruel tyrants and oppressors; when they saw the glory of God in whom they believed profaned by the triumphs of idolatry; when indignation burned

in their hearts for the indignities which the people suffered at heathen hands—can we wonder that their generous hearts planned vengeance and deliverance, and that to accomplish their purpose violence was no crime, deceit was no sin in their eyes. They had not, it is true, the grace to wait in patient faith, but they had the zeal and the courage to take their lives in their hands and risk them freely for their country and their God. They had the noble spirit of self-sacrifice, ready to give all they had on the altar of religion and patriotism. They had the faith in God which marks the saint and the disdain of danger which marks the hero. And so He who accepts a man according to what he hath and not according to what he hath not, accepted their virtues and covered their sin, even as we hope He will accept us when we act up to the light given to us, even though our best deeds are mixed up with sin. A. C. H.

30. Eighty years. One is pleased to read of these long intervals of repose, when under their happy constitution and with the abundance guaranteed to them by the Divine blessing, during those periods when exempted both from famine and the power of their enemies, they must have had much of individual and family enjoyment. T. C.

31. After him was Shamgar. Of the tribe and family of Shamgar nothing is said in the Scripture, except that he was the son of Anath, nor are we informed how long he judged Israel. From his having to do principally with the Philistines, it is probable that he originated in one of the tribes bordering upon their territory of Judah or Dan. *Bush.*—It seems Israel needed deliverance, for *he delivered Israel*; how great the distress was, Deborah afterward related in her song, that *in the days of Shamgar the highways were unoccupied*, etc. That part of the country which lay next to the Philistines was so infested with plunderers, that people could not travel the roads in safety, but were in danger of being set upon and robbed; nor durst they dwell in the unguarded villages, but were forced to take shelter in the fortified cities. H.

The Syrian goad is a very different affair from our ox-goad. Maundrell, who had the curiosity to measure several of these goads, found them to be “about eight feet long, and at the biggest end six inches in circumference. They were

armed at the lesser end with a sharp prieker for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working.” He speaks of those which he saw in the north of Syria; those that I saw in the south I should judge to be quite as large. It is easy, therefore, to credit the account of Shamgar’s achievement, who made such havoc among his enemies with an ox-goad. We may suppose, however (so fragmentary is the notice), that he was not entirely alone; that some others rallied to his aid with such implements of labor as they could snatch at the moment. *Huckell.*

Suggested Truths. That God’s purpose of deliverance may be accomplished by bad as well as good actions; that the degree in which good men fall short of the glory of God varies widely according to their opportunities; and that God graciously accepts the thoughts and intents of loving and faithful hearts in spite of sin committed in ignorance of his will, dealing with men’s souls through the infinite merits of the death of his dear Son, and with respect to the full satisfaction of his atoning blood—to whom be glory and praise for ever and ever! We learn also to take a juster view of the great figures which are set before us in Holy Scripture. They are not ideal figures or perfect characters. They are faithful delineations of the real lives of men and women who lived two or three thousand years ago; who stood up head and shoulders above their contemporaries in certain great gifts and qualities, but who necessarily partook of the character of the age they lived in. While we try to emulate their faith, we must judge of their actions by the light of the perfect law of God. A. C. H.

God can make those eminently serviceable to his glory and his church’s good, whose extraction, education, and employment, are very mean and obscure. He that has the residue of the Spirit, could, when he pleased, make ploughmen judges and generals, and fishermen apostles. It is no matter how weak the weapon is, if God direct and strengthen the arm. An ox-goad, when God pleases, shall do more than Goliath’s sword. And sometimes he chooses to work by such unlikely means that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God. H.

Section 223.

THIRD SERVITUDE UNDER JABIN. DELIVERANCE UNDER DEBORAH AND BARAK,
Jael and Sisera. SONG OF DEBORAH.

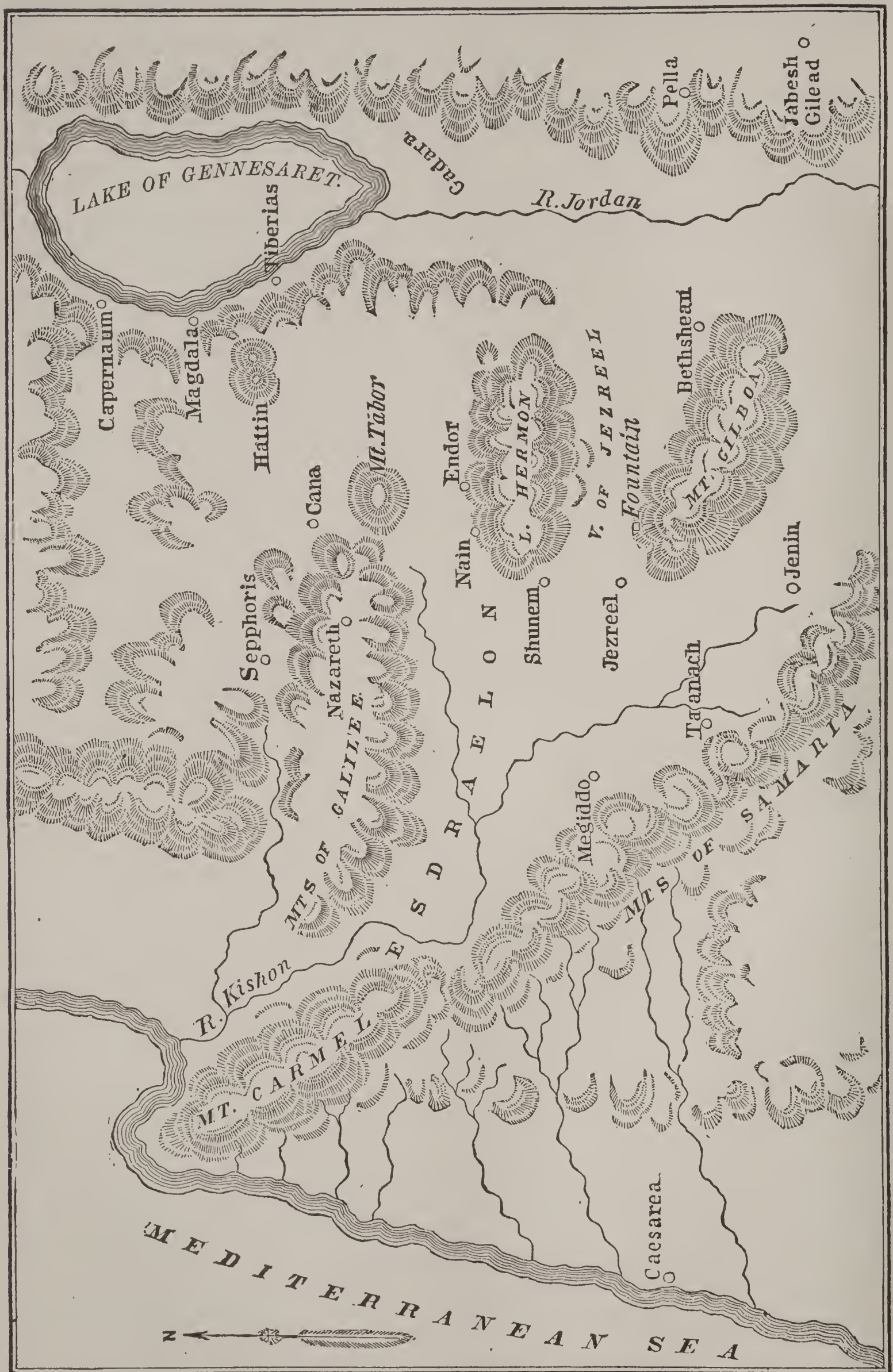
JUDGES 4 : 1-24 ; 5 : 1-31.

4 1 AND the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, when
 2 Ehud was dead. And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned
 in Hazor ; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.
 3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD : for he had nine hundred chariots of iron ;
 and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.
 4, 5 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And
 she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill country of
 6 Ephraim : and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she sent and called
 Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD, the
 God of Israel, commanded, *saying*, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten
 7 thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun ? And I will draw
 unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his
 8 multitude ; and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go
 9 with me, then I will go : but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go. And she said, I will
 surely go with thee : notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine
 honor ; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and
 10 went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh ;
 and there went up ten thousand men at his feet : and Deborah went up with him.
 12, 13 And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And
 Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the peo-
 14 ple that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon. And De-
 borah said unto Barak, Up ; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into
 thine hand : is not the LORD gone out before thee ? So Barak went down from mount Tabor,
 15 and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and
 all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak ; and Sisera lighted down from his
 16 chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host,
 unto Harosheth of the Gentiles : and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword ; there
 11 was not a man left. (Now Heber the Kenite had severed himself from the Kenites, even from
 the children of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far as the oak
 17 in Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.) Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael
 the wife of Heber the Kenite : for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the
 18 house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in,
 my lord, turn in to me ; fear not. And he turned in unto her into the tent, and she covered
 19 him with a rug. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink ; for I am
 20 thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. And he
 said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and
 21 inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here ? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's
 wife took a tent-pin, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote
 the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground ; for he was in a deep sleep ;
 22 so he swooned and died. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him,
 and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And he came
 23 unto her ; and, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples. So God subdued
 24 on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the
 children of Israel prevailed more and more against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had
 destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

5 1 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son
 of Abinoam on that day, saying,
 2 For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,

For that the people offered themselves
 willingly,
 Bless ye the LORD,

- 3 Hear, O ye kings ; give ear, O ye princes ;
I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD ;
I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of
Israel.
- 4 LORD, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedest out of the field of
Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also
dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
- 5 The mountains flowed down at the pres-
ence of the LORD,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of the
LORD, the God of Israel.
- 6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the high ways were un-
occupied,
And the travellers walked through by-
ways.
- 7 The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.
- 8 They chose new gods ;
Then was war in the gates :
Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel ?
- 9 My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among
the people :
Bless ye the LORD.
- 10 Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit on rich carpets,
And ye that walk by the way.
- 11 Far from the noise of archers, in the places
of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts
of the LORD,
Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.
Then the people of the LORD went down
to the gates.
- 12 Awake, awake, Deborah ;
Awake, awake, utter a song :
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity cap-
tive, thou son of Abinoam.
- 13 Then came down a remnant of the nobles
and the people ;
The LORD came down for me against the
mighty.
- 14 Out of Ephraim *came down* they whose
root is in Analek ;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples ;
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the
marshal's staff.
- 15 And the princes of Issachar were with De-
borah ;
As was Issachar, so was Barak ;
- Into the valley they rushed forth at his
feet.
- By the watercourses of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
16 Why satest thou among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks ?
At the watercourses of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart.
- 17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan :
And Dan, why did he remain in ships ?
Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks.
- 18 Zebulun was a people that jeopardated their
lives unto the death,
And Naphtali, upon the high places of the
field.
- 19 The kings came and fought ;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo :
They took no gain of money.
- 20 They fought from heaven,
The stars in their courses fought against
Sisera.
- 21 The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.
- 22 Then did the horsehoofs stamp
By reason of the prancings, the prancings
of their strong ones.
- 23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ;
Because they came not to the help of the
LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.
- 24 Blessed above women shall Jael be,
The wife of Heber the Kenite,
Blessed shall she be above women in the
tent.
- 25 He asked water, *and* she gave him milk ;
She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
- 26 She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's ham-
mer ;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
she smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his
temples.
- 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay :
At her feet he bowed, he fell :
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
- 28 Through the window she looked forth, and
cried,
The mother of Sisera *cried* through the lat-
tice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming ?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots ?
- 29 Her wise ladies answered her,



ESDRAELON AND LOWER GALILEE.

Yea, she returned answer to herself,
 30 Have they not found, have they not divid-
 ed the spoil?
 A damsel, two damsels to every man;
 To Sisera a spoil of divers colors,
 A spoil of divers colors of embroidery,

Of divers colors of embroidery on both
 sides, on the necks of the spoil?
 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD :
 But let them that love him be as the sun
 when he goeth forth in his might.
 And the land had rest forty years.

The Plain of Esdraelon constitutes one of the great physical features of Palestine. We fail to understand, in any good measure, the physical geography of the country, unless we obtain a distinct conception of the form, extent, position, and surroundings of the Plain of Esdraelon. Physically it is a no less important feature of the country than the plain of the sea-coast or the valley of the Jordan; while in historic associations it is even richer than either of these. This plain, intersecting the country from east to west, opens eastwardly on the valley of the Jordan and westwardly on the Mediterranean Sea. The portion bordering the Jordan valley is divided by parallel mountain-ridges, while that which lies upon the Mediterranean Sea, along the north of Carmel, has received a separate name—the Plain of Acre. The central portion of the Biblical “Plain” or “Valley of Megiddo,” is an immense triangle, the *apex* of which is toward the west, at the eastern end of Mount Carmel; its *sides* being the mountain-ranges of Galilee and Samaria—that of Galilee running east twelve miles, that of Samaria south-east eighteen miles, from Carmel; and the *base* being a line twelve or fifteen miles in length, crossing from Jenîn northward to the mountains of Galilee below Nazareth, and touching, on the way, the western ends of Gilboa and Little Hermon, which come in from the east. Mount Tabor, at the northeastern extremity of this plain, lies over against Little Hermon, as the latter lies over against Gilboa, and as the latter again lies over against the mountains of Samaria. The ridges of Little Hermon and Gilboa divide the portion of the plain east of the triangle into three nearly equal parts; the middle part being the famous “Valley of Jezreel” leading down to the Jordan valley by a gentle decline. The name “Esdraelon,” now given to the great plain, is only a Greek form of the Hebrew Jezreel. The river Kishon and its tributaries carry the surplus water of the great plain from Jenîn and the foot of Gilboa and Tabor westward to the Mediterranean. The chief stream of the Kishon runs northwestwardly. A stream from the neighborhood of old Megiddo, the modern *Lejjun*, flowing northwardly into the Kishon, is doubtless the same with the Scriptural “waters of Megiddo” (5 : 19). The Kishon, for the

greater part of its length, is dry in summer. Flowing through a nearly level plain, yet at no great distance from a range of lofty hills, one can readily understand that, in a sudden rain-storm and the consequent rush of water from the hills, the river should speedily and widely overflow its banks, and the adjacent country become deluged. N. C. B.

Esdraelon is the great battle-field of Old Testament history. Here, after Barak, fought Gideon and the Midianites; here Saul fell before the Philistines; Josiah before the Egyptians under Necho. Here in later times fought Vespasian, the Crusaders, and Buonaparte. H. C.—The great and final world-battle of the Apocalypse is to be fought in “Armageddon,” the hill or city of Megiddo. That may not, indeed, be a physical battle, fought out on the Plain of Esdraelon, in front of old Megiddo; yet if it was desirable that the field of the great battle, decisive in the world’s spiritual history, should receive a name suggestive of desperate conflict, of valorous exploits, and at last of signal victory through God’s grace, none better could have been chosen than Armageddon. N. C. B.

The whole borders of the Plain of Esdraelon are dotted with places of high historic and sacred interest. On the east we have Endor, Nain, and Shunem, ranged round the base of the “hill of Moreh” or “Little Hermon;” then Bethshean in the centre of the “valley of Jezreel;” then Gilboa, with the “well of Harod,” and the ruins of Jezreel, at its western base. On the south are Engannim, Taanach, and Megiddo. At the western apex, on the overhanging brow of Carmel, is the scene of Elijah’s sacrifice; and close by the foot of the mountain below runs the Kishon, on whose banks the false prophets of Baal were slain. On the north are Nazareth and Tabor. P. S.

4 : 1-3. What a continued circle is here of sins, judgments, repentance, deliverance! The association with idolaters taints them with sin, their sin draws on judgment, the smart of the judgment moves them to repentance, on their repentance follows speedy deliverance, on their deliverance they sin again! Who would not think idolatry an absurd and unnatural thing? which as it hath the fewest inducements, so had also the most direct prohibitions from God;

and yet after all their warnings Israel falls into it again. Neither affliction nor repentance can secure an Israelite from redoubling his worst sin, if he be left to his own frailty. *Bp. H.*—The battle of Merom, one of the two great battles by which Joshua first secured possession of the land, had been fought against a confederacy of northern Canaanites under Jabin, king of Hazor. The issue was a complete victory over the confederate army, followed, after long warfare, by the capture of all their towns (Hazor itself being burned with fire), and the slaughter or dispersion of the whole Canaanite population of the district (Josh. 11). Yet now, about a hundred and fifty years later, Hazor is found again as a great Canaanite city, with another king of the same name as in the days of Joshua, with powerful allies among neighboring Canaanite kings, and with a numerous army, so well equipped that it had no fewer than nine hundred war-chariots. *Lee.*

4. Deborah, a prophetess. The term *prophetess* is applied to Deborah in the sense that she was endued with Divine gifts to instruct, direct, and govern others, and also excited by God's Holy Spirit to declare his will to the people; which was the peculiar office of a prophet. *Bp. Patrick.*

5. Deborah, "the bee," is described as a "burning woman." The meeting-place for all in Israel who sought judgment at her hands was between Ramah and Bethel, under a palm-tree, which afterward bore her name. Thence she sent for Barak ("lightning"), the son of Abinoam, from the far north, from Kedesh in Naphtali. His ready obedience proved his preparedness. *A. E.*—He could do nothing without her head, nor she without his hands; both together made a complete deliverer and effected a complete deliverance. The greatest and best are not self-sufficient, but need one another. *H.*—Deborah cannot lead the army, but she can inspire it. Barak cannot prophesy, but he can fight. There is work for the seer and work for the warrior. The world always needs its prophets and its heroes. The worker without the thinker will blunder into confusion; the thinker without the worker will fail for want of power to execute his designs. *W. F. A.*

6. Kedesh. West of the plain and lake of Huleh are several small plains, which, with their bright green crops and the wooded hills that slope gently down to them, form some of the softest and most beautiful scenery in Palestine. The largest and most picturesque of these plains is that of Kades, or Zaanaim, with the ruins of Kedesh-naphtali, lying on its western border.

Wilson.—Kedesh Naphtali, when freed by Barak from foreign foes, must have comprised within its borders everything that could make it a flourishing town. They had every kind of produce at their very doors; and this would be the case with all that long string of towns which studded the goodly heritage of Naphtali. *Tristram.*

Mount Tabor. A remarkable mountain of Palestine rises abruptly from the northeastern arm of the Plain of Esdraelon. It is beautiful and symmetrical in its proportions, as seen from a distance. It lies about six or eight miles almost due east from Nazareth. *Dic. B.*—It is wholly separated from surrounding elevations on all sides except the west, and on that side connected only by a low ridge with the mountains of Galilee bounding the Plain of Esdraelon, with which it stands in line. The height of Tabor above the sea is reckoned at eighteen hundred feet; the height above the adjacent plain being not far from fifteen hundred. *N. C. B.*

View from Tabor. On the north, Naphtali's brown peaks running in a serried ridge athwart the glowing sky. To the right a corner of the Sea of Galilee, slumbering in its deep bed, and towering over it the glittering top of Hermon. On the east, the long purple ridge of Gilead, rising like a colossal wall from the Jordan valley. On the south and southwest the Plain of Esdraelon, Palestine's battle-field, sweeping round the base of the mount and extending, a sea of verdure, away to the hills of Samaria and the dark ridge of Carmel. Four miles distant, beyond an eastern arm of the plain, rose "the hill Moreh," a gray, treeless ridge, with the villages of Endor and Nain upon its side. Over its left shoulder appeared the bare white top of Gilboa. Standing on this spot I was able to understand why Tabor was the gathering place of the northern tribes. Connected by a wooded ridge with the hills of Galilee and the mountains of Naphtali, it was always accessible to them; while at the same time it stood out commanding the Plain of Esdraelon. Its steep sides were easily defended, and its broad top gave ample space for the organization of a little army of mountaineers. The graphic story of Barak and Deborah was here brought vividly before my mind: Barak eagerly watching the advance of Sisera across the plain, while Deborah, with the enthusiasm of a patriot and the inspiration of a prophetess, looked and prayed to heaven for the signal to attack. At length her eye saw it, and she cried: "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand!" *Porter.*



MOUNT TABOR.

10-13. Barak summons the people of his region to Kedesh and thence marches with them to Mount Tabor. Recruits come in from Issachar and Manasseh and Ephraim and Benjamin; but the more distant tribes, though invited to the contest, fail to be represented. The king of the Canaanites hears of the rising, and speedily Sisera, his chief captain, with an immense army and a dreaded cavalry force—"his horses and chariots of iron"—makes his way southward, and encamps on the lower side of Esdraelon, at the river Kishon, by the friendly Canaanite towns of Taanach and Megiddo. From the summit of Tabor, Megiddo could be seen—fifteen miles to the southwest. N. C. B. —With what scorn did Sisera look at these gleanings of Israel! How unequal did this match seem of ten thousand Israelites against his vast host and his nine hundred chariots of iron! The faith of Deborah and Barak was not appalled with this world of adversaries, which from Mount Tabor they saw hiding all the valley below them: they knew whom they had believed, and how little an arm of flesh could do against the God of Hosts. *Bp. H.*

14. Deborah raised the cry, which twice over occurs in the story of the battle, "Arise, Barak." She gave with unhesitating confidence to the doubting troops the augury which he had asked before the insurrection began, "This is the day when the Lord shall deliver Sisera into thy hand." Down from the wooded heights descended Barak and his ten thousand men. It is emphatically repeated that they were "on foot," and thus contrasted in the most forcible manner with the horses and chariots of their enemies. *Stanley.*—From the top of the mount, where he was completely unassailable by the enemy's iron chariots, he heroically sallies down to the level plain with his far inferior force, in order that by giving Sisera every advantage the glory of the victory to be achieved over him might be so much the greater.

15. The Lord discomfited Sisera. Or, as the Heb. implies *confounded, threw them into disorder, drove them tumultuously together*, causing chariots to break and overthrow chariots, and horses and men to be mingled in their fall in wild confusion. It was not so much the bold and unexpected charge of Barak that produced this effect, as a supernatural panic, a terror from God, that seized their spirits, threw them into irretrievable confusion, and made them an easy prey to the sword. *Bush.*—The expression is the same as when Jehovah fought against Egypt (Ex. 14 : 25), and again when before Gibeon Joshua bade sun and moon stand still (Josh.

10 : 10). It indicates the direct interference of the Lord through terrible natural phenomena. As we gather from Ju. 5 : 20-22, a fearful storm swept down from heaven in face of the advancing army. The battle must have drawn toward Endor, where its fate was finally decided (Ps. 83 : 9, 10). It was impossible to retreat, and only in one direction could flight be attempted. And now the waters of Kishon had swollen into a wild torrent which swept away the fugitives! A. E.

The beaten army fell back toward the northeast—toward Tabor—on the line of direct march for the Israelites to the battle—and when passing three miles to the south of Tabor, at Endor, they were overtaken by the Israelites, or more probably were intercepted by a reserve from Tabor, and slain in great numbers. "They perished at Endor," says the Psalmist; "they became as dung for the earth" (83 : 9). Such was the first great battle of Megiddo. The *second*, for its importance, and for the triumphant success of the Israelites, compares well with the first. This was fought under Gideon, and also pertains to the period of the Judges. (See Section 227.) The battle of Mount Tabor, in which Napoleon and Kleber defeated an immense Turkish army, was fought on the Plain of Esdraelon, south of the hills of Nazareth, in the middle of spring (April 15th, 1799). The statement is made on good authority that multitudes of the Turks perished on that day by falling into the branch of the Kishon which flows from the western end of Mount Tabor. N. C. B.

17. Sisera fled on foot from the plain, over the Nazareth hills, across Zebulun's territory, and, after travelling forty miles from the battlefield, reached Heber's encampment at Kedesh. *Tent Work.*

Jael and Sisera.

Consider together Chs. 4 : 17-22 and 5 : 24-27.

11. Now Heber the Kenite. This verse comes in here parenthetically to prepare the way for what is soon to be said about Jael, a woman of this family. The verse should be included in the usual marks of a parenthesis. *Bush.*

21. Jael took a nail of the tent. One of the great pins by which the tent was fastened to the ground. *Patrick.*—The tents of the Bedoween Arabs are kept firm and steady by bracing or stretching down their eyes with cords tied down to hooked wooden pins well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet; one of these pins answering to the nail, as the mallet does to the hammer. *Shaw.*

Smote the pin into his temples.

Jael was moved to this action by some extraordinary and overruling impulse, making her the instrument of Divine vengeance. This case, like that of Ehud, is not to be judged by ordinary rules. *Hales*.—It can scarce be doubted that she had some Divine direction or impulse to stir her to do what she did. The resolution she took appears very extraordinary, and so has the marks and tokens of its being from the extraordinary hand of God. In this view all is clear and right; she ought to obey God rather than man, and all obligations to man cease when brought in competition with our higher obligations toward God. *Waterland*.—As to this act of Jael's (like that of Ehud's in the chapter before), we have reason to think she was conscious of such a Divine impulse upon her spirit to do it, as did abundantly satisfy herself (and it ought therefore to satisfy us) that it was well done. Thus do the weak things of the world confound the mighty. See here Jael's glory, and Sisera's shame. *H*.—If all the circumstances and influences which impelled Jael to the daring act, and sustained her in it, were known, we should find that she violated neither the customs of her people, nor the laws of war then in force, nor the abstract and greater laws of righteousness, by thus destroying the enemy of God's people and the oppressor of her own, who from necessity sought in her tent an asylum to which he had no right, and the granting of which might have involved her and her whole family in ruin. *W. M. Thompson*.

Sisera had no right to enter her tent at all. The women's apartment of an Arab tent, the only place in it where any privacy exists, must never under any circumstances be entered by a man. Instances are recorded among the Arabs of a defeated warrior having hidden himself in the apartments of women; but such a heinous breach of Eastern etiquette has in each case been followed by the sentence of death. The insult and wrong done to Jael from the point of view of a *Bedaween* woman was such that, in order to avenge her honor, her husband or her brother would have been bound by the unwritten but inflexible code of Eastern law to take Sisera's life. She simply became the executioner of a sentence which some other person would, under ordinary circumstances, have carried out. In Deborah's inspired commendation of the conduct of Heber's wife, particular stress is laid upon the fact of her being a *Bedaween* woman, and acting nobly and righteously from a *Bedaween's* point of view. "Blessed let her be among women in the tent." This could not possibly have

been said if it were a case of treachery or murder in connection with a guest. *Neil*.

From 5 : 30 we see what kind of a man Sisera was, and what kind of hunting he was doing with his war chariots. He would surround some town of the Hebrews, slay the men and the old women, rob the homes, then burn them. But he would take the damsels—the young girls, and divide them as slaves among his fierce warriors. Jael had seen these Canaanites go by her tent dragging their weeping captives to endure a life of degradation worse than death. Let me modernize the story : There was a settlement in the Far West some years ago, where a score of families lived in peace and safety. Suddenly a band of Sioux started on the war-path. They slew and scalped all the men. Then they took the wives and daughters of those whom they had slain and scalped, "to every man a damsel or two," and started for the wilderness. On their retreat they passed the lodge of a Chippewa hunter. He was away, but his wife was at home. They stopped with their captives and demanded food. She gave it to them and they started on. The chief for some cause lingered behind the rest. The Chippewa woman, maddened by the sight of those girls carried away to be the slaves of the savages who had murdered their husbands and fathers, seized a rifle and shot that Sioux chieftain, the leader of that robber band, and slew him ! Was she a cruel murderess, or a righteous avenger? *C. E. Babb*.

Deborah is one of the most striking figures in Jewish history. She was the leader and guide of her countrymen in the effort which restored to them peace and freedom, civil and religious. She was the judge who awarded praise or blame to those who had been false or true to the cause of God and of Israel. And she utters an emphatic and extraordinary blessing upon Jael. Jael's action on the one hand, and Deborah's inspired judgment on the other, raise questions to which no reflecting mind can be insensible. We cannot get over the difficulty by saying that Deborah's utterance about Jael is not inspired; that it is only a page of dark human passion occurring in a generally inspired poem. If Deborah's blessing of Jael is uninspired, it is hard to claim inspiration reasonably for any part of her song; and if Deborah's song is not inspired, it is difficult to say what other portions of the Book of Judges are. In weighing Deborah's language, we have to consider, first of all, that Sisera's life was, in Deborah's judgment, rightly forfeited. She speaks of him as the Lord's enemy. And what Deborah knew about him, Jael

knew also. Neither of them had any doubt that his life was justly forfeited. *Liddon.*

We cannot but assume as the most natural supposition, that Jael knows that a Divine command has gone forth for the destruction of Sisera and his host. In that case she has as much right to kill Sisera as Deborah herself has to do so ; she is as much even under an obligation to do so as Deborah herself. The whole look of things is that Jael is one with Israel throughout, that she acts upon the impulse which has roused Israel. Deborah extols her just as if she were a sister in the faith.

It ought to be noted in forming our estimate of Jael's act, who the person she put to death was. He was the Canaanitish general and leader, against whom, as the representative of the Canaanitish power, the thunderbolt was aimed and the decree of destruction sent forth—"I will deliver *him* into thine hand." Sisera is the very life and soul of the Canaanitish kingdom, the ruling spirit and the prime mover of the war. Therefore the Divine decree of destruction, which had gone forth against the Canaanitish host generally, applied with a hundredfold strength to him ; and Jael, if she believed in that decree, would think that this, if any, was a case in which it should be executed. This consideration heightens the enormous responsibility which the sudden appearance of Sisera at Jael's tent door throws upon her. Shall she not at once complete the rescue of Israel by killing Sisera ? Or shall she give way to a scruple and save him ? In this case she sends Sisera back to his own country to take again the part of leader of the Canaanites, and collect chariots and horsemen for another invasion. She must be either treacherous to Israel, then, or treacherous to Sisera. This was the only alternative which was open to Jael, and it would seem to have come upon her all at once, and with a short time to decide it. She decides that the real rescue of Israel requires the death of Sisera. The act is upon the type of the deceit of early ages, it is public-spirited, and strongly sympathetic. She has the whole religious cause and movement before her eyes. She is in intimate relations with Deborah and the leaders of Israel, and she knows she is conferring an enormous and incalculable benefit on the cause of Israel. . . . The great error in the treatment of the act of Jael has been looking at it apart from all those surrounding circumstances, which so evidently affix the character and the motive to the act, and give it its true interpretation. Jael's act does not stand by itself, but has relation to and is part of the whole action which

arises up under a peculiar, pressing dispensation. If that whole action is right, and if the exterminating war is justified by the Divine command, Jael's act comes under the general head of this war and this justification. Deborah's praise is clear and decided, and she declares that Jael "is blessed above women" on account of this act. Deborah was an inspired prophetess, and her approval of the act is identical with the approval of Scripture. But the only moral standard known to Deborah was that of the dispensation under which she lived. It was a dispensation which supposed a defective state of moral ideas in the people, and which required for its own reception an erroneous standard of morals. The praise therefore bestowed under that dispensation upon a particular act did not imply its moral correctness, according to a universal standard, did not satisfy the Bible as a whole, because it satisfied a part of the Bible. It is not presented to us as satisfying a later and a Christian standard of morality. But it should never be forgotten that this act was an act of true religious zeal done in defence of religion, and for the preservation of a Divine dispensation in the world, against idolatry, polytheism, and corruption of morals. *Mozley.*

THE SONG OF DEBORAH.

Ch. 5 : 1-31.

In the song of Deborah we have the only prophetic utterance that breaks the silence between Moses and Samuel. Hers is the one voice of inspiration (in the full sense of the word) that breaks out in the Book of Judges. In her song are gathered up all the lessons which the rest of the book teaches indirectly. Hers is the life, both in her own history and in the whole period, that expresses the feelings and thoughts of thousands, who were silent till "she, Deborah, arose a mother in Israel." Hers is the prophetic word that gives an utterance and a sanction to the thoughts of freedom, of independence, of national unity, such as they had never had before in the world, and have rarely had since. *Stanley.*

Deborah's hymn of triumph was worthy of the victory. The solemn religious commencement—the picturesque description of the state of the country—the mustering of the troops from all quarters—the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof—the life, fire, and energy of the battle—the bitter pathos of the close—lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production. But this hymn has great historic as well

as poetic value. It is the only description of the relation of the tribes to each other, and of the state of society during the period of the Judges. The northern tribes—Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali—appear in a state of insurrection against their oppressors: they receive some assistance from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The pastoral tribes beyond Jordan remain in unpatriotic inactivity. Dan and Asher are engaged in their maritime concerns. Of Judah and Simeon there is no notice whatever, as if they had seceded from the confederacy, or were occupied by enemies of their own. *Milman.*

This song opens (verse 2) with the briefest reference to the great theme of praise; calls triumphantly (3) on all kings and princes to give ear to her song; sets forth in lofty poetic conceptions the coming of Jehovah from the south, in earthquake, tempest, and storm for their help (4, 5); then falls back to give historically the state of the country prior to this great victory (6, 7); refers to the giant sins which brought on these foreign wars (8); calls on men of every grade, rulers and people, to join in her song (9-11); then summons herself and Barak to their tribute of praise (12). Again she resumes the history of this great event—how she called the people to battle (13); how one tribe after another responded or did not respond to this call (15-18); how the kings of Canaan came and fought but took no spoil (19), because God and his stars in the heavens and all the forces of nature fought for Israel (20-22). God's angel bids them curse Meroz who would not come to the help of the Lord (23); but blesses Jael the Kenite—whose exploits the song spreads out in ample detail (25-27), not omitting a home-picture of the scenes in Sisera's household and the kindling expectations there which were never realized! *H. C.*

It is in the song of Deborah, rather than in the prose narrative of the sacred writer, that we best understand the exigency of the times, and the spirit, the passion of the leaders of the theocracy. The theocracy was for the moment almost impersonated in Deborah. And Deborah lives in her song: in all the power of her prophetic utterance, in all the penetrating intensity of her womanly feeling. Yet Deborah is not merely a poet; she is a judge; and in the midst of her passion she apportions with discriminating accuracy their exact measure of desert to the different tribes; to all who had contributed, or who ought to have contributed, to the great victory. *Liddon.*

Her independence of character, her motherly tenderness, her patriotic enthusiasm, and her

well-sustained energy in the campaign of the Israelites combined to make her a remarkable woman. She dwelt among her own people and did not separate from them in their emergency, but went with them up on Mount Tabor. The campaign in which she led was not one of temporary results, for the tyranny and the oppression of the foe were broken for all time. She was a mother, which meant a good deal in those days, when sons were sacrificed in battle, and she carried into her work a mother's heart. She stood for home, for domestic purity, and social order. As a mother in Israel, the maternal spirit dominated all the qualities of her character. Under the shelter of the palm-tree she sat as prophetess, and they whose hearts were crushed betook themselves to her to unbosom their wrongs and to pour out their complaints to her, and in return they received marks of her patient sympathy, and were taught how to bear their wrongs. She braced up many a broken spirit and counselled the suffering ones to cling to the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She taught them to abandon their idols and strange gods and to go back and call upon the God of Israel. When she spoke her words had power in Israel. All the wrongs of her people had been steeped into her spirit—they were the wrongs of the sons of Jacob. Her mind was one of wonderful poise. The nation had become the child of her adoption, and all the love of a mother's heart was bestowed upon it to accomplish the work given her to do. She never wavered in her religion; that remained steadfast and was without a particle of superstition. *Behrends.*

1. She was a "Mother in Israel;" and with a mother's heart, and with the vehemency of a mother's and a patriot's love, she had shot the light of love from her eyes, and poured the blessings of love from her lips, on the people that had "jeopardied their lives unto the death," against the oppressors; and the bitterness, awakened and borne aloft by the same love, she precipitated in curses on the selfish and coward recreants who "came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." As long as I have the image of Deborah before my eyes, and while I throw myself back into the age, country, and circumstances of this Hebrew Boadicea, in the yet not tamed chaos of the spiritual creation; as long as I contemplate the impassioned, high-souled, heroic woman, in all the prominence and individuality of will and character, I feel as if I were among the first ferments of the great affections,—the proplastic waves of the microcosmic chaos,

swelling up against and yet toward the outspread wings of the Dove that lies brooding on the troubled waters. So long all is well, all replete with instruction and example. In the fierce and inordinate, I am made to know and be grateful for the clearer and purer radiance which shines on a Christian's path, neither blunted by the preparatory veil nor crimsoned in its struggle through the all-enwrapping mist of the world's ignorance; while in the self-oblivion of these heroes of the Old Testament—their elevation above all low and individual interests, above all, in the entire and vehement devotion of their total being to the service of their Divine Master—I find a lesson of humility, a ground of humiliation, and a shaming, yet rousing, example of faith and fealty. *Coleridge.*

20. The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. Aye, though no one of them swerved from its appointed path or halted in its ordained journey. And so the stars fight in their courses to-day against all evil-doers; that eternal order which is reflected in the ordered motion of the stars is all on the side of the good and the true; and it moves on, neither hasting nor resting, to the accomplishment of the good, to the overthrow of the evil. No deed that is done upon earth can break in upon the harmonious motion of the spheres, no wickedness of man's can break the line of God's embattled hosts; they move majestically on to the accomplishment of his holy will. That order is *for* us, not against us; and its stability is a sign that the forces of evil are powerless to break it. "All things work together for good to them that love God;" and the rising and setting of suns and the stately march of the stars, are tokens of that order which will never become disorder, and this in spite of all the assaults of Satan. The stars in their courses are fighting for us, if we are the Lord's; and so is he who is both our Lord and the Lord of the stars. *S. S. T.*

23. Curse ye Meroz. The effect of the curse, like that pronounced upon Amalek (Ex. 17 : 14), seems to have "blotted out the remembrance" of its history and its site. **Said the angel of the Lord.** The Angel-Jehovah, before spoken of (ch. 2 : 1). It was Jehovah that commanded the curse. She would not otherwise have interrupted her strains of thanksgiving by the utterance of so fearful a judgment. *Bush.*—Had the people of Meroz taken up arms against Jehovah? No! Had they gone over to the enemy, and fought against the chosen people? No! What, then, had they done? *Nothing!* Their neutrality was their crime. "Because they came not up to the help of the Lord

against the mighty." *Dr. Newton.*—Meroz was not merely wanting in duty to the memories and traditions of Moses and of Joshua; it was undutiful toward the true King of the sacred nation, as yet unrepresented below by any earthly viceroy; the King who, though He could have done otherwise, had made His honor dependent on the loyalty and affection of His subjects. Meroz would not come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." To refuse aid to the sacred cause until it was certain of success, was in a man or a community belonging to the covenanted nation an act of virtual apostasy; and Meroz was not merely politically disfranchised, it was religiously excommunicated. *Liddon.*

There are occasions when not to act for God is to act against God. When the Lord calls for help against the mighty, he that withholds that help is cursed. By so doing he is helping the enemies of God, and among the enemies of God he will fall. There are times, our own times are such, when the enemies of the cross of Christ are unusually active against the truth. Science and literature, wit and intellect, the press and the platform, fashion and numbers, are pressed into the service, to cast discredit upon the everlasting gospel of the grace of God. At such a time to be neutral and indifferent is to be a traitor to the Lord Jesus Christ. At such a time he calls to his help against the mighty all who believe in him, who love him, and who hope in his salvation. "Who is on the Lord's side, who?" is his appeal to his redeemed. Let no believer hold back from giving what help is in his power: the help of word and deed; the help of bold confession and of unflinching countenance; the help of tongue and pen; the help, if need be, of suffering and of martyrdom; the help of a devoted life, and of a holy Christian walk, in all humility, and purity, and faith, knowing whom he has believed, and fully assured that faith will be crowned with victory. *A. C. H.*

30. "Oppressors" like the Mesopotamians, Moab, Ammon, Midian, Habor, and the Philistines, made war chiefly that they might make captives to be carried away into slavery. The "damsel or two" which each of the soldiers of Jabin's army was expected to bring back from the battle under Sisera were of course intended for the slave-market. To what extent similar oppressions in the after history of Israel were accompanied by the removal of captives out of the land, and their sale as slaves in foreign countries, we have abundant evidence. In Joel we find God represented as "pleading" with certain nations, "for my people and my heritage,

Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations . . . having cast lots for my people ; and having given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine that they might drink" (3 : 2). *Lee.*

31. Deborah lived in an age when God's people stood against their enemies by dint, not of patient suffering, but of heroic fighting, imperilling their lives on the high places of the bloody fields of real war. She put herself in full sympathy with God, and met the circumstances and conditions of her time with the truest Christian heroism. Her sympathies are intensely deep and strong, and withal are thoroughly *for* God and *against* his enemies. With what terseness and force does she put it ! So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord ; whenever, anywhere in the lapse of the ages, they take up arms against Thee, or how strong soever they may be in chariots and in horsemen — let them go down quick to such a doom as this ! But let all who love God and put themselves with heart and hand upon his side, be as the rising sun sweeping up the eastern heavens in his might and glory ! Could anything be more beautiful,

nay, rather, more sublimely grand in poetic conception than this ? H. C.

All the enemies of the Lord will surely perish. The day is not far off which will mark the difference between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Then they that love the Lord will shine forth as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. The righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and they who confessed Christ before men will be confessed of him before the angels of God. Such are the fuller prophecies of the New Testament, confirming the obscurer prophecies of the Old, and encouraging us to hold on our faith without wavering, in the certainty of the great reward.

The people are set free from their oppressors, and have rest for forty years. The lesson which this chapter impresses upon us especially is *that God's strength is made perfect in human weakness*. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob ; I will help thee, saith the Lord," is an exhortation which under every possible circumstance is made easy to comply with by the recollection of these wonderful acts of God. A. C. H.

Section 224.

NAOMI AND RUTH. RETURN FROM MOAB TO BETHLEHEM. RUTH GLEANS IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.

RUTH 1 : 1-22 ; 2 : 1-23.

1 1 AND it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, 2 he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech 3 Naomi's husband died ; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab ; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth : and they 4 dwelled thereabout ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of them ; and the woman 5 was left of her two children and of her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab : for she had heard in the country of Moab 6 how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her ; and they went on the way to 7 return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house : the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the 8 dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of 9 her husband. Then she kissed them ; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they 10 said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters : why will ye go with me ? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be 11 your husbands ? Turn again, my daughters, go your way ; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have an husband to-night, and should

13 also bear sons ; would ye therefore tarry till they were grown ? would ye therefore stay from
 having husbands ? nay, my daughters ; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of
 14 the LORD is gone forth against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again : and
 15 Orpah kissed her mother-in-law ; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-
 in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god : return thou after thy sister-in-law.
 16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee : for
 whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my
 17 people, and thy God my God : where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried : the
 18 LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when she saw
 19 that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her. So they two went
 until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem,
 20 that all the city was moved about them, and *the women* said, Is this Naomi ? And she said
 unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara : for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with
 21 me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty : why call ye me
 22 Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me ? So
 Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out
 of the country of Moab : and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

2 1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of
 2 Elimelech ; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now
 go to the field, and glean among the ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace.
 3 And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came and gleaned in the field
 after the reapers : and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz,
 4 who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto
 5 the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, the LORD bless thee. Then
 6 said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this ? And the
 servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came
 7 back with Naomi out of the country of Moab : and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and
 gather after the reapers among the sheaves : so she came, and hath continued even from the
 8 morning until now, save that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth,
 Hearest thou not, my daughter ? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence,
 9 but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go
 thou after them : have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee ? and when
 thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.
 10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I
 found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger ?
 11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done
 unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband : and how thou hast left thy father
 and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest
 12 not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD,
 13 the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Then she said, Let me
 find grace in thy sight, my lord ; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast
 14 spoken kindly unto thine handmaid, though I be not as one of thine handmaidens. And at
 meal-time Boaz said unto her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the
 vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers : and they reached her parched corn, and she did eat,
 15 and was sufficed, and left thereof. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his
 16 young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not. And also
 pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not.
 17 So she gleaned in the field until even ; and she beat out that she had gleaned, and it was about
 18 an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city : and her mother-in-law saw
 what she had gleaned : and she brought forth and gave to her that she had left after she was
 19 sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day ? and where
 wroughtest thou ? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-
 in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day
 20 is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not
 left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is nigh
 21 of kin unto us, one of our near kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, Yea, he said unto me,
 22 Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi

said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, 23 and that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest ; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

The lovely idyl of Ruth is in sharp contrast with the bloody and turbulent annals of Judges. It happily reminds us of what we are apt to forget in reading such pages, that no times are so wild but that in them are quiet corners, green oases, all the greener for their surroundings, where life slides on in peaceful isolation from the tumult. The peaceful pictures of this little book, multiplied many thousand times, have to be set as a background to the lurid pictures of the Book of Judges. A. M.—It brings out one aspect of the times—viz., the religious feeling. For, notwithstanding the public corruption in certain of the tribes, there was a religious feeling pervading the nation as a body politic. Like the song of Deborah, and the prayer of Hannah, it reveals the reign of religion in the homes of the people. Gregg.

It prepares the way for the history of the house of David. It shows under what inherited influences of devotion and purity the youth of the shepherd-king was likely to have been passed. Of the authorship of the book we have comparatively few materials for conjecture. Like almost all the historical books of the Old Testament, it comes before us as absolutely anonymous. E. H. P.—On the concurrent testimony of all the ancient authorities it is part of the Jewish Canon of books written and compiled by their prophets. We must rest it on their authority, endorsed subsequently by Christ and his apostles. H. C.—In the absence of any note of time, we may place this story somewhere in the period of forty years of rest between Deborah and Gideon. Hence its insertion at this point. B.

Design of the Book.

To set forth the origin of David historically and genealogically, showing how a heathen, belonging to a people so hostile to the theocracy as the Moabites, was honored to become the progenitor of the great King David, because she placed unlimited trust in the Lord, and sought protection from the God of Israel. Davidson. —To lead to Providence ; to show us how conversant it is about our private concerns, and to teach us in them all to have an eye to it, acknowledging God in all our ways, and in all events that concern us. To lead to Christ, who descended from Ruth, and part of whose genealogy concludes the book, from whence it is fetched into Mat. 1. The scene is laid in Beth-

lehem, the city where our Redeemer was born. H.—To pre-intimate, by the recorded adoption of a Gentile woman into the family from which Christ was to derive his origin, the final reception of the Gentile nations into the true church, as fellow-heirs of the salvation of the Gospel. The moral lessons which it incidentally teaches, that private families are as much the objects of Divine regard as the houses of princes ; that the present life is a life of calamitous changes ; that a devout trust in an overruling Providence will never fail of its reward ; and that no condition, however adverse or afflicted, is absolutely hopeless, are truths that were never more strikingly illustrated than in the brief and simple narrative before us. Bush.

Its Character and Contents.

The Book of Ruth is not a history ; nor is it a biography. It is only a little biographical episode in a history. It is *a story* ; but, without doubt, *a true story* ; and it speaks, by what Ewald calls “ the pre-eminent beauty of its pictures and descriptions,” not to the hearts of Hebrews only, but to universal man. Morison. —This charming Eastern pastoral vindicates its claim to a place in the Canon of Scripture, by its simple and lovely pictures of the family relation, and of domestic and social life. Nowhere else in the Old Testament are the tender ties of kindred, of the maternal and filial relations, so exquisitely portrayed. Where else shall we find such truth and sincerity of unselfish maternal love, such purity and fervor of filial devotion ? Conant.

In this book we have a glimpse into the domestic life of Israel, with its anxieties, sorrows, and sweetness. Women and children, honest work and homely talk ; deaths, births, and marriages ; loves, memories, and prayers, are all here. Human kindness, filial piety, affectionate constancy, uncomplaining toil, true chastity, sweet patience, strong faith, noble generosity, simple piety—are all here, and they are all observed by God, and are shown to be pleasing to him, who rewards them in due time. J. R. T.

Bethlehem is only a short distance from the edge of the great wilderness of Judah, which lies along the west flank of the Dead Sea. In this direction, fertile valleys are seen for only a few miles, after which is a billowy waste of rocky ridges—their general level declining rapidly toward the deep, streaming chasm of the



BETHLEHEM.

Dead Sea. Beyond the sea the blue masses of Moab appear. N. C. B.—Bethlehem occupies part of the summit and sides of a narrow ridge which shoots out eastward from the central chain of the Judean mountains, and breaks down abruptly into deep valleys on the north, south, and east. The steep slopes beneath the village are carefully terraced, and the terraces sweep in graceful curves round the ridge from top to bottom. In the valleys below, and on a little plain to the eastward, are some cornfields, whose fertility doubtless gave the place its name—Bethlehem, “house of bread.” *Porter*.

We were now so near Bethlehem that we could look straight down into the broad valley that lies between the gardens of the town and a range of lofty hills which bounds it northward, the far-off purple-tinted mountains of Moab forming its apparent limit to the east. Down in the valley, there seemed to spread before us the whole scene of the inimitable story of the Book of Ruth. The land near us—part of which had quite recently been under the plough, while other parts were green with the braird of wheat or barley—was unenclosed, as in those olden times so many thousand years since. It scarcely required an effort of fancy to fill up the scene again with its living figures,—to picture the honest, manly Boaz down on those paternal fields; the jocund reapers plying their busy sickles; poor maidens gleaning behind them; while Ruth, the beautiful stranger from Moab,

mingles silently with them, and gathers handfuls in her ample veil, to be taken home to Naomi and beaten out at nightfall. *Thomson*. —To this day the fields of Bethlehem illustrate many an incident in the Book of Ruth. The very salutation, “The Lord be with you!” and the reply, “The Lord bless thee!” may be heard as the farmer goes up to his laborers. The supper of the reapers, when the day’s work is done, is still the parched corn eaten on the spot—a few bunches of fresh ears, singed in a fire kindled for the purpose and then rubbed and roughly winnowed by the hand. The large cotton or linen cloth, “the veil,” which binds down the head-dress of the Bethlehemite woman, is very distinct from the female dress elsewhere, and is still, like Ruth’s, large enough to hold six measures of barley; and still the owner sleeps by his corn-heaps at night, generally with all his family, till the harvest is finished. *Tristram*.

The fields of Bethlehem are among the sacred spots of earth. Among them was the home of Boaz; the scene of Ruth’s gleaning, and of her marriage. In these pastures was trained the youthful David, who became the hero, the minstrel and the king of Israel. Between the pastures of Bethlehem and the stars of heaven was sung the angels’ song of good-will and peace. Here was born the Son of David, who was the Son of God. J. R. T.

5. Naomi is left destitute of her country, her

husband, her children, her friends ; yet even out of these hopeless ruins will God raise comfort to his servant. The first good news is that God hath visited his people with bread ; now therefore, since her husband and sons were irrecoverable, she will try to recover her country and kindred. She that came from Bethlehem under the protection of a husband, attended with her sons, stored with substance, resolves now to measure all that way alone. Her adversity had stripped her of all but a good heart ; that remains with her, and bears up her head in the deepest of her extremity. True Christian fortitude wades through all evils, and keeps firm footing against the stream. *Bp. II.*

8. As you have dealt with the dead and me. This beautiful analogy has its root idea in love and home. Naomi links her own being with "the dead." And with true hearts they never can be disassociated. Anniversaries of remembrance make our separations no more distant. They soften them. They give place for comforting remembrances ; but the dead are near as ever. What a blessing so to live, so to fill our place as sons and daughters, so to sweeten, sublime, and sanctify life that others may make our conduct a plea with that God who has known our heart and life, and say, "The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and me." W. M. S.—These Scriptures of olden time touch us so tenderly because they recognize the living hand, the loving heart of God. It is this which will make them never grow old. It is this which makes their inspiration living, and keeps their fountains of consolation open still. We are always meeting and parting, journeying forth and returning home. Our families are broken up, our churches have gates of entrance and departure, and the picture of life is always one of a tent-life. We are pilgrims and strangers, as all our fathers were. The key-note of this text is in that word "kindly." W. M. S.

9. She pictured for them a new and a possible home in Moab, and prayed, "The Lord grant you that ye may find rest each of you in the home of her husband." Home according to her ideal is a rest. There is something radically wrong in the home which is not a rest. Home is a rest ; a rest for the husband ; a rest for the wife ; a rest for the children. *Gregg.*

10-14. It was a noble act of self-denial on the part of the aged Hebrew widow by this plain speaking to strip herself of all remaining comfort, and to face the dark future, utterly childless, alone, and helpless. And when one of them, Orpah, turned back, though with bit-

ter sorrow at the parting, Naomi had a yet more trying task before her. Ruth had, indeed, fully understood her mother-in-law's meaning ; but there was another sacrifice which she must be prepared to make, if she followed Naomi. She must not only be parted from her people, but she must also be prepared to turn her back upon her ancestral religion. But Ruth had long made her choice, and in the words which intimated it there is such ardor and earnestness, such resolution and calmness, as to lift them far above the sphere of mere natural affection or sense of duty. They intimate the deliberate choice of a heart which belongs in the first place to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and which has learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge. In truth, the choice of Ruth is wholly unaccountable, except on the ground that she felt herself in heart and by conviction one of a Hebrew household—an Israelitish woman in soul and life, and that although she should in a sense be disowned by those with whom she had resolved to cast in her lot. A. E.

As Naomi starts on her journey back to Bethlehem, they seem alike determined to cast in their lot with her, and so, with God's people. It is not until Naomi calls upon them "to count the cost" that a difference appears. Orpah is not willing to give up all for God. When shut up to a present choice, between Israel and Moab, she weeps, but "she goes back to her people and her gods." Poor, lost Orpah ! "Almost persuaded," standing upon the very threshold of the kingdom of heaven, but not entering therein. There is no sadder story in all the Scriptures. And the saddest thing about it is, that it is a story repeating itself from day to day, in every age and every country into which the Gospel comes. *Armstrong.*

Ruth realized, in her affectionate heart, a keen sense of her mother-in-law's forlorn condition, returning alone to her once prosperous but now desolate home. Ruth could not consent to abandon her under these circumstances. The reply is beautiful beyond expression, in the tenderness with which the firm purpose of an affectionate heart is expressed : "Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried ; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Surely, the simple eloquence of the mouth that speaks out of the abundance of the heart, never found

more beautiful and touching expression than in these words of this young widow. K.

Her vow has stamped itself on the very heart of the world; and that not because of the beauty of its form simply, though even in our English version it sounds like a sweet and noble music, but because it expresses in a worthy form, and once for all, the utter devotion of a genuine and self-conquering love. It is the spirit which informs and breathes through these melodious words that make them so precious to us, and that also renders it impossible to utter any fitting comment on them. *S. Cox.*—There is no utterance in the Old Testament more pathetic and melodious than these words. Courage and sacrifice, love and devotion, breathe all through them. They condense, too, all that is prophetic of coming experience—the lodging and the loneliness, the weary pilgrimage and the grave in a foreign land. The mind cannot frame sentences like these without the glow of a sincere and sacrificial heart. We feel as we read them what grandeur there is in human nature when love evokes all its depth of power. It is not a skilful touch that can do this, but a soul alive to the call of love and duty. *W. M. S.*

Ruth's passionate burst of tenderness is immortal. It has put into fitting words for all generations the deepest thoughts of loving hearts, and comes to us over all the centuries between as warm and living as when it welled up from that gentle, heroic soul. How many hearts, since Ruth spoke her vow, have found in it the words that fitted their love best! How often they have been repeated by quivering lips, and heard as music by loving ears! What has made them thus "enduring forever" is that they express most purely the self-sacrifice which is essential to all noble love. The very inmost longing of love is to give itself away to the object beloved; therefore all lesser givings are its food and delight; and when Ruth threw herself on Naomi's withered breast, and sobbed out her passionate resolve, she was speaking the eternal language of love, and claiming Naomi for her own, in the very act of giving herself to Naomi. Human love should be the parent of all self-sacrificing as of all heroic virtues; and in our homes we do not live in love, as we ought, unless it leads us to the daily exercise of self-suppression and surrender, which is not felt to be loss, but the natural expression of our love, which it would be a crime against it and a pain to ourselves to withhold. But while her human love wrought self-sacrifice, it was not human love alone that did it. The cord that drew her was twisted of two strands, and her

love to Naomi melted into her love of Naomi's God. Blessed they who are drawn to the knowledge and love of the fountain of all love in heaven by the sweetness of the characters of his representatives in their homes, and who feel that they have learned to know God by seeing him in dear ones, whose tenderness has revealed his, and whose gracious words have spoken of his grace. If Ruth teaches us that we must give up all if we would truly follow the Lord, the way by which she came to her religion may teach us how great are the possibilities, and consequently the duties, of Christians to the members of their own families. If we had more elder women like Naomi, we should have more younger women like Ruth. *A. M.*

Like Ruth, this exemplary pattern of a resolute convert to God, must we take the same course. We must take the Lord for our God. "This God is *my God forever and ever*; I have avouched him for mine." When we take God for our God, we must take his people for our people in all conditions; submit to the same yoke and draw in it faithfully; take up the same cross and carry it cheerfully; go where God would have us to go, lodge where he would have us to lodge, die where he will have us die. We must resolve to continue and persevere; and herein our adherence to Christ shall be closer than that of Ruth to Naomi; since death itself shall not separate us from our happiness in Christ. We must bind our souls with a bond never to break these resolutions, and swear unto the Lord that we will cleave to him. Fast bind, fast find. He that means honestly does not startle at assurances. *H.*

18. She left speaking unto her. Naomi, when she saw that Ruth was steadfastly-minded to go with her and to join the people of God, quietly yields to her desire and resumes her homeward journey. Ruth, too, resolutely sets forward upon a course whose prospects were so overshadowed and whose results were so unpromising. Like Abraham, she leaves the land of her nativity; she goes forth, not knowing whither she went, *for like him, too, she had received* and obeyed the command of Jehovah. Everything *before* her is *dark*. Naomi is not only poor, without name or means, but, through age and infirmity, utterly dependent. If Ruth goes with her the burden of their common support will rest entirely upon her own efforts. Yet she firmly declares her unalterable purpose to accompany the tried mother, to provide for her wants, to share her burdens and griefs, and henceforth to have one home, one interest, and one faith with Naomi in life and in death.

Neither in word, in feeling, nor in action does she manifest a desire to *look back*. But steadfastly, cheerfully, and with a whole unwavering soul she sets her face toward Judah, and stays the steps and encourages the desolate heart of Naomi as they journey thither. B.

The gentleness of a true woman covers a courage of the patient, silent sort, which, in its meek steadfastness, is nobler than the contempt of personal danger, which is vulgarly called bravery. Of that best kind of heroes there are few brighter examples, even in the annals of the church which numbers its virgin martyrs by the score, than this sweet figure of Ruth, as the eager vow comes from her young lips, which had already tasted sorrow, and were ready to drink its bitterest cup at the call of duty. She may well teach us to rectify our judgments, and to recognize the quiet heroism of many a modest life of uncomplaining suffering. So these two lonely widows are left, each seeking to sacrifice herself for the other. Who shall decide which was the more noble and truly womanly in her self-forgetfulness,—the elder, sadder heart, which strove to secure for the other some joy and fellowship at the price of its own deepened solitude; or the younger, which steeled itself against entreaties, and cast away friends and country for love's sweet sake? We rightly praise Ruth's vow, but we should not forget Naomi's unselfish pleading to be left to tread her weary path alone. A. M.—She had lived in a heathen country so devoutly, that Ruth could say, "Thy God shall be my God"—a beautiful testimony to Naomi's fidelity, to her victory over idolatrous usages, to her own personal influence over others. She has had a battle of life to fight, and she has fought it well. How brave and noble and faithful a woman she is! W. M. S.

22. Barley Harvest. This phrase illustrates a common method of marking time in the East; not very definite, indeed, but sufficiently so for all practical purposes. It was in April or May; and that was the most favorable time for Naomi with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, to make the journey from the land of Moab, whence Bethlehem was in sight, across the Jordan valley, and up again into the hills of Judea. Everywhere there were flowers; the air was mild, and earth and sky were beautiful,—it was glorious springtime in the home of her childhood. Merrill.

2 : 2, 3. Glean after him in whose sight I shall find grace. She knows not which way to go nor whom to inquire for, but will trust Providence to raise her up some friend

or other that will be kind to her. Let us always keep up good thoughts of the Divine Providence, and believe that while we do well it will do well for us. And it did well for Ruth; for when she went out alone, without guide or companion, to glean, *her hap was to light on the field of Boaz*. To her it seemed casual, she knew not whose field it was, nor had she any reason for going to that more than any other, and therefore it is said to be *her hap*; but Providence directed her steps to this field. H.

It was the same Divine "hap" by which sleep fled from Ahasuerus on that decisive night; the same "hap" by which so often, what to the careless onlooker seems a chance "occurrence," is sent to us from God directly. A. E.—"Her hap" determined her marriage, her wealth, her happiness and that of her mother-in-law, her union with Israel, her motherhood, her position as an ancestress of David and of Christ. In such seemingly insignificant causes originate the most momentous issues. Therefore regard nothing as insignificant. Look out for and follow the leadings of Divine Providence. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." J. R. T.

That Divine hand leads Ruth blindfold to the field of Boaz. Now God begins to repay into her bosom her love and duty to her mother-in-law. Reverence and loving respects to parents never yet went away unrecompensed: God will surely raise up friends among strangers to those that have been faithful at home. Bp. II.

4. Usages described in the Book of Ruth are such as we should expect to find in a people living under a law like that in the books ascribed to Moses. *The Lord*, Jehovah, is the name by which men speak of God as their Protector (1 : 9; 2 : 12). The law which allowed the right of the gleaner in the time of harvest is assumed and acted on. The state of society depicted is one in which laborers and landowners are not yet divided, but lived in friendly intimacy, greeting one another with devout benedictions. It is not the least value of the book that it brings before us the ideal of village life contemplated by the law as at least approximately attained. E. H. P.

Boaz comes to his reapers with a blessing in his mouth: "The Lord be with you," as one that knew if he were with them, and not the Lord, his presence could avail nothing. All the business of the family speeds the better for the master's benediction. Bp. II.—The benediction of Boaz awakens a corresponding benediction from the reapers. Men are to us very much what we are to them. Confidence begets confi-

dence. Blessing awakens blessing. This is what we long and pray for—cessation of war between capital and labor, and mutual benediction. W. M. S.—Boaz set an example of piety to his servants which could hardly fail to produce a favorable impression on their minds. Some are content to get work out of their servants: they take no interest in their souls—no more than if, like the cattle they tend, they had no souls at all. Unlike these, Boaz spoke to his servants as a God-fearing man. This appears in the warnings and kind instructions he gave, both to them and to Ruth. *Guthrie.*

8, 9. Though a stranger to her personally, the story of Ruth was well known to Boaz. Seen in the light of her then conduct and bearing, its spiritual meaning and her motives would at once become luminous to Boaz. For such a man to know, was to do what God willed. Ruth was an Israelite indeed, brave, true, and noble. She must not go to any other field than his; she must not be treated like ordinary gleaners, but remain *there*, where he had spoken to her, “by the maidens.” A. E.

12. Boaz knew—and we know—better than Ruth herself did, that from the moment she had cast her world behind her back and thrown herself in simple trust upon God, his blessing surrounded her and overshadowed her, and would not fail to be manifested in due time. They that honor Him, he would honor. And she had honored him by her faith, and He was bound by all his covenants of mercy to honor her before men and angels. *Kit.*—Boaz knew what she had done for man, and what she had given up for God. Hers, as he now assured her, would be recompense for the one, and a *full* reward of the other, and that from Jehovah, the God of Israel, under whose wings she had come to trust. And now for the first time, and when it is past, the secret of her long-hidden sorrow bursts from Ruth, as she tells it to Boaz: “Thou hast consoled me, and spoken to the heart of thine handmaid.” A. E.

15, 16. It was a thoughtful and delicate form of kindness to Ruth, thus to increase her gleanings, and yet to make them appear the fruit of her own industry. *Thomson.*

17, 18. Her corn, when threshed out, formed no less than “about an ephah of barley”—being not much less than a bushel. Such produce of one woman’s gleaning for one day excited the surprise of Naomi when her daughter-in-law brought home the rich produce of her day’s labor. But Ruth had been specially favored through the attention of Boaz, who had privately instructed the reapers to let fall some of the

handfuls, and leave them on purpose that she might glean them; and to suffer her to glean even among the sheaves without rebuke. This custom of beating out the corn upon the harvest-field still subsists in Palestine. *Kit.*

The way led us through open fields, where the people were in the midst of the wheat-harvest. The beautiful tracts of grain were full of reapers of the Henâdy Arabs, and also of gleaners almost as numerous. These were mostly women; and this department seemed almost as important as the reaping itself, since the latter is done in so slovenly a manner that not only much falls to the ground but many stalks remain uncut. In the season of harvest the grains of wheat, not yet fully dry and hard, are roasted in a pan or on an iron plate, and constitute a very palatable article of food. This is eaten with bread, or instead of it. The whole scene of the reapers and gleaners, and their “parched corn,” gave us a lively representation of the story of Ruth and the ancient harvest-time in the fields of Boaz. . . . We found the inhabitants of Huj still engaged in treading out the barley harvest. *Several women were beating out with a stick handfuls of the grain which they seemed to have gleaned.* One female was grinding with a handmill, turning the mill with one hand, and occasionally dropping in the grain with the other. *Robinson.*

20. Ruth returns home with her ephah of barley; and thankfully magnifies the liberality of Boaz, her new benefactor: Naomi repays his beneficence with her blessing; “Blessed be he of the Lord.” If the rich can exchange their alms with the poor for blessings, they have no cause to complain of an ill-bargain. Our gifts cannot be worth their faithful prayers: therefore it is better to give than receive; because he that receives, hath but a worthless alms; he that gives, receives an invaluable blessing. *Bp. II.*—The first feeling that sprang up in the heart of Naomi at the mention of the name of Boaz was one of adoration. The next was a generous desire in reference to Boaz himself. She prayed that he might be graciously recompensed by Jehovah for the kindness he had shown that day, both toward the living—Ruth and herself—and toward the deceased—Elimelech and his sons. After giving scope to her feelings of adoration and benediction, Naomi, with the prompt and practical directness of a true woman, said to her daughter-in-law, **The man is near to us, he is one of our peculiar kinsmen** (our *Goëlim*). She meant that he was one of those peculiarly near kinsmen who had a right of redemption over what-

ever lands may have formerly belonged to her and the first right of purchase over whatever lands might yet remain in the possession of herself or of her daughter-in-law. Naomi and Ruth, though greatly reduced in circumstances, and painfully pent up in present straits, were far from being paupers. They were proprietors ; but their property was not, for the time being, available for income or sustenance. It had either been farmed out or allowed to lie waste. *Morison.*

Section 225.

RUTH'S CLAIM RECOGNIZED BY BOAZ. CEREMONY OF TRANSFERRING THE RIGHT OF REDEMPTION. MARRIAGE OF BOAZ AND RUTH. NAOMI'S JOY IN THE SON BORN. ANCESTRAL LINEAGE OF DAVID.

RUTH 3 : 1-18 ; 4 : 1-22.

3 1 AND Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee,
2 that it may be well with thee ? And now is there not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens
3 thou wast ? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself there-
fore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the threshing-
floor : but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drink-
4 ing. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie,
and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down ; and he will tell thee what thou
5, 6 shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest I will do. And she went down unto
7 the threshing-floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. And when Boaz
had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of
8 corn : and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass
at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself : and, behold, a woman lay at his
9 feet. And he said, Who art thou ? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid : spread
10 therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid ; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed
be thou of the LORD, my daughter : thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at
11 the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now,
my daughter, fear not ; I will do to thee all that thou sayest : for all the city of my people
12 doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman :
13 howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning,
that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well ; let him do the kinsman's part :
but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to
14 thee, as the LORD liveth : lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until the morn-
ing : and she rose up before one could discern another. For he said, Let it not be known that
15 the woman came to the threshing-floor. And he said, Bring the mantle that is upon thee, and
hold it ; and she held it : and he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid it on her : and he
16 went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my
17 daughter ? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six
18 *measures* of barley gave he me ; for he said, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. Then
said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall : for the man will not
rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

4 1 Now Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there : and, behold, the near kins-
man of whom Boaz spake came by ; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one ! turn aside, sit down
2 here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city,
3 and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the near kinsman, Naomi,
that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth the parcel of land, which was our
4 brother Elimelech's : and I thought to disclose it unto thee, saying, Buy it before them that sit
here, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it : but if thou wilt
not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know : for there is none to redeem it beside thee ; and
5 I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the

field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, 6 to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the near kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance : take thou my right of redemption on 7 thee ; for I cannot redeem it. Now this was *the custom* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, for to confirm all things ; a man drew off his shoe, and 8 gave it to his neighbor : and this was the *manner of attestation* in Israel. So the near kins- 9 man said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself. And he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was 10 Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his 11 brethren, and from the gate of his place : ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel : and 12 do thou worthily in Ephrathah, and be famous in Beth-lehem : and let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of 13 this young woman. So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife ; and he went in unto her, 14 and the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman, and let his 15 name be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age : for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven 16 sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became 17 nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi ; and they called his name Obed : he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. 18, 19 Now these are the generations of Perez : Perez begat Hezron ; and Hezron begat Ram, 20 and Ram begat Amminadab ; and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon ; 21, 22 and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed ; and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

The Book of Ruth gives us a glimpse of every-day life in Bethlehem ; in home and in harvest-field, in its general gossip and its law-suits, more than three thousand years ago. Glancing over the lines of this sweet and pure pastoral idyl, we feel that rarely did human story more impressively demonstrate the fine and favorable issues of seemingly suppressed lives, the hidden wealth of true and unobtrusive souls, for nations and for the race. *Clifford*. — We have a picture, which evermore lives in the hearts of men, of the true heroism of a gentle woman, a witness of the purity and blessedness of the domestic life in many an unknown home in Israel, an early gathered sheaf and first-fruits, reaped at “ the *beginning* of barley harvest,” and prophesying of the gathering in of the Gentiles, a lesson to Israel of its calling among the nations, and a rebuke of exclusiveness and hatred. Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson might seem to teach that Israel was set to be God's sword, Naomi and Ruth teach the better lesson that it was appointed to be God's torch, raying out the light of his name into the darkness. A. M. — If, as regards its contents the Book of Ruth stands on the threshold of the history of David, as regards its spirit it stands, like the Psalms, at the threshold of the Gospel. Not merely on

account of the genealogy of Christ, which leads up to David and Boaz, but on account of the spirit which the teaching of David breathes, do we love to remember that Israel's great king sprang from the union of Boaz and Ruth, which is symbolical of that between Israel and the Gentile world. *Cassel*.

3 : 1. My daughter, shall I not seek out for thee a rest ? The expression *rest*, or *resting-place*, when used in such circumstances as environed Ruth, would be at once understood. It was a *home* to which Naomi pointed, a home for her daughter's heart. In such a home, if warm and pure, there would be repose for the affections. *Morison*.

2. There is an immense amount of Naomi in the book. She is so largely in it that the book might with propriety be called the “ Book of Naomi.” As a kinsman, the law of the Hebrews opened a direct way for Boaz to enter into marriage with Ruth, and the plan of Naomi was to set the law at work. *Gregg*.

The tale which follows needs no apology, for it is quite pure to those who are pure. It may read strangely, but let us remember that it belongs to a social state and an order of manners as different as possible from ours. Naomi suggested nothing that would shock the moral ideas

of the time, while she placed a just confidence in the religious integrity of Boaz and the virtuous simplicity of Ruth. D. F.—All the actors in what was to follow were prepared to take their parts. The manner in which it was brought about must not be judged by our western notions, although we are prepared to defend its purity and delicacy in every particular. Nor could Naomi have well done otherwise than counsel as she did. For the law which fixed on the next-of-kin the duty of redeeming a piece of land (Lev. 25 : 25), did *not* connect with it the obligation of marrying the childless widow of the owner, which (strictly speaking) only devolved upon a brother-in-law (De. 25 : 5); although such seems to have been the law of custom in Bethlehem, and as we believe, in strict accordance with the *spirit* and object if not with the *letter* of the Divine commandment. Thus Naomi had no *legal* claim upon Boaz. Lastly, in accordance with the law, it was not Naomi but Ruth who must lay claim to such marriage (De. 25 : 7, 8). A. E.

7. We needed no guard around our tent. The owners of the crops came every night and slept upon their threshing-floors to guard them, and this we had found to be universal in all the region of Gaza. We were in the midst of scenes precisely like those of the Book of Ruth, when Boaz winnowed barley in his threshing-floor, and laid himself down at night to guard the heap of corn. *Robinson*.

Natives of the East care little for sleeping accommodations, but rest where weariness overcomes them, lying on the ground. They are, however, careful to cover their feet, and to do this have a sheet of cloth that they tuck under the feet, and drawing it up over the body suffer it to cover the face and head. Neither men nor women alter their dress at night, and the laboring class, or travellers in a serai, where there are men, women, and children, rest together, the men with their feet covered, and the women wrapped in their veils or sarees. *Postans*.

9. Boaz put his own hand to the work of winnowing barley, and having supped with a cheerful heart, fell into a sound sleep at the end of the heap of corn in the threshing-floor. Then at his feet Ruth lay down in silence. It was the form of claiming the kinsman's protection. D. F.—She reminded him that she had the claim of a childless widow on the next of kin. What might have seemed at variance with a customary standard of self-reverence was transformed by that claim, by the sanction which the law gave to it, into the truest modesty. E. H. P.

10. Her employment of the word "kins-

man," or *goël*, was evidence to Boaz that she was thinking of the respect which she owed to her husband's memory. Her concern in discharging that duty struck the heart of Boaz; and all the more as, in his opinion, she might easily have found open doors, had she wished for them, in quarters where there was no connection of kinship with her deceased husband. "She did not go after any young man, whether poor or rich." She preferred, above all such, her first husband's elderly "kinsman." *Morrison*.

11-15. In reply to his inquiry, the few words she speaks—exquisitely beautiful in their womanly and Scriptural simplicity—explain her conduct and her motive. Two things here require to be kept in mind: Boaz himself sees nothing strange or unbecoming in what Ruth has done; on the contrary, he praises her conduct as surpassing all her previous claims to his respect. Again, the language of Boaz implies that Ruth, although daring what she had felt to be right, had done it with the fear which, in the circumstances, womanly modesty would prompt. We almost seem to hear the low whispered tones, and the tremor of her voice, as we catch the gentle, encouraging words of Boaz's reply: "My daughter," and as he stills the throbbing of her heart with his kindly-spoken, fatherly: "Fear not!" No thought but of purity and goodness, and of Israel's law intruded on the midnight converse of those who were honored to become the ancestors of our Lord. And now he, on his part, has explained to Ruth, how there is yet a nearer kinsman, whose claims must first be set aside, if the law is to be strictly observed. And, assuredly, if observance of the law of redemption, with all that it implied in Israel, had not been the chief actuating motive of Boaz and Ruth, there would have been no need first to refer the matter to the nearer kinsman, since there could be no possible hindrance to the union of those whose hearts evidently belonged to each other. A. E.

18. Naomi assured her that Boaz, having undertaken this matter, would approve himself a faithful, careful friend; *He will not be at rest, till he have finished the matter*. Naomi believes Ruth has won his heart, and therefore he will not be easy till he knows whether she be his or no. This she gives as a reason why Ruth should sit still and not perplex herself about it, that Boaz had undertaken it, and he would be sure to manage it well. H.

4 : 1-10. The story turns on what is known as the Levirate law, the obligation laid upon the brother of one who died married but childless,

to take the widow of the deceased and to raise up seed unto his brother. Failing a brother, the duty passed on to the next of kin. It might involve a burdensome addition to the kinsman's household. It might bring, as a compensation, the right of purchasing, or, in the technical language of the Law, "redeeming," the inheritance which the widow might otherwise be compelled to sell for what she could get to a stranger. From the Hebrew verb which expressed the latter act, the kinsman so acting was called the *goel*, or "redeemer," and the term came by a natural association to be used for the kinsman upon whom the duty and the right devolved.

E. H. P.

It is an *old-world picture* that is drawn in the narrative, unveiling to view the grave, solemn manners of primitive but well-mannered times. The city had but one gate, through which, therefore, every one must needs pass. It would hence become the principal place of concourse for the townsfolk. It was the place of primitive marketing and bartering. It was the place of primitive judicature. Boaz was careful to be early in the morning at this gateway, and immediately on arrival he took steps to secure a judicial settlement, if needed, and, at all events, a complete attestation of the facts of any nuptial arrangement that might be made. He invites certain venerated fathers to be seated on the stone benches at the base of the city wall, as he had an affair to transact which he wished them by their presence to attest. Boaz opens his case with his kinsman. It was this:—Naomi, recently returned from the land of Moab in reduced circumstances had resolved to sell the property which had belonged to her deceased husband. Now was the opportunity of the nearest kinsman. In virtue of being the nearest, he was entitled to the first offer of the property. "Buy it, therefore," said Boaz, "before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt act the part of the nearest kinsman (as thou art entitled to do), then act it, and buy the property." The kinsman seemed glad that he should have such an opportunity of adding to his patrimonial estate, and accordingly, in presence of the elders and other inhabitants, he heartily said, "I will act the kinsman's part." But after brief pause Boaz resumed, and said in the presence of the judicial conclave, "In the day when thou buyest the land from Naomi, thou must buy it not from her only, but from Ruth also, as prospective heiress; and more, thou must buy it *with Ruth at present upon it, as its inalienable appurtenant*, in order that the name of her deceased husband may, by the

blessing of the God of Israel, descend with it in the line of her posterity." The kinsman was not prepared to accept the property on Naomi's terms, lest it might mar his own inheritance. Hence he said to Boaz, in the presence of the elders, "I cannot act the part of the nearest kinsman; do thou it, Boaz, in my room."

Morison.

Boaz brought, first, before him the *privilege* of the kinsman: redemption of the land. This he accepted. But when Boaz next reminded him, that this privilege carried with it a certain *duty* toward Ruth, and that, if the latter were refused, the former also was forfeited, he ceded his rights to Boaz. The bargain was ratified according to ancient custom in Israel by a symbolical act, of which we find a modification in De. 25 : 9. Among all ancient nations the "shoe" was a symbol either of departure (Ex. 12 : 11), or of taking possession (Ps. 60 : 8). In this instance the kinsman handed his shoe to Boaz—that is, ceded his possession to him. Alike the assembled elders, and those who had gathered around to witness the transaction, cordially hailed its conclusion by wishes which proved, that "all the city knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman," and were prepared to receive the Moabitess as a mother in Israel. A. E.

11. *The Lord make the woman like Rachel and like Leah.* Such a solemn benediction of those who were going to be married was very ancient. The Jews continue the practice to this day; which, they say, is always in the presence of ten grave persons at the least, conformable to this example of Boaz, and the eldest of them pronounces the benediction, which is a sort of ratification of the engagement entered into. Bp. II. —In this benediction, reference is made to the patriarchal families, and especially to the house of Pharez, an ancestor of Boaz, because he was the only grandson of Jacob, from whom sprung two generic families in Israel. Remark also the characteristic frankness of Scripture, which, in tracing the origin of what may be called the Holy Family, conceals no stain of shame upon the lineage. Tamar and Rahab both are in the line of which David came, and a Greater than David. The reputation of Ruth is without moral taint, but she also took her place in the family, as a special trophy of the mercy of God, from the doomed people of Moab. D. F. —It heightens greatly the interest of this narrative that the people of whom it treats were in the lineage of Christ according to the flesh. How all the distinctions both of nation and character are merged and confounded in His incarnation! Verily, He humbled Himself in as-

suming our nature ! and it gives forth this lesson, that there is no degradation so sunken and low, no turpitude so utterly worthless and vile, as to be beyond the reach of His grace, or the possibility of being restored and elevated under the economy of His Mediatorship. T. C.

Three heathen women are found in the genealogy of Christ, and such women as Rahab and Tamar. God is also the God of the heathen, and his great plan of salvation embraces all heathen nations. How false, therefore, is the fancy, that in the Old Testament there is exhibited a narrow-minded restriction of the grace of God, as if it were bestowed on Israel alone ! C. G. B. — We may see, in Ruth's entrance into the religion of Israel, a picture of what was intended to be the effect of Israel's relation with the Gentile world ; that they had another mission than destruction, and were set in their land, as the candlestick in the tabernacle, that light might stream out into the darkness of the desert. The story of the Moabitess, whose blood flowed in David's veins, was a standing protest against the later narrow exclusiveness which called Gentiles dogs, and prided itself on outward connection with the nation, in the exact degree in which it lost real union with the nation's God, and real understanding of the nation's mission. A. M.

13. Boaz took her, with the usual solemnities, to his house, and *she became his wife*. Boaz had prayed that this pious proselyte might receive a full reward of her courage and constancy from the God of Israel, *under whose wings she was come to trust* ; and now he became an instrument of that kindness, which was an answer to his prayer, and helped to make his own words good. Now she had the command of those servants with whom she had associated, and of those fields in which she had gleaned. H. — Ruth hath gleaned all the fields and barns of a rich husband ; and, that there might be no want in her happiness, by a gracious husband she hath gained a happy seed ; and hath the honor, above all the dames of Israel, to be the great grandmother of a king, of David, of the Messiah. Oh, the sure and bountiful payments of the Almighty ! Who ever came under his wing in vain ? Who ever lost by trusting him ? Who ever forsook the Moab of this world for the true Israel, and did not at last rejoice in the change ? Bp. II.

16. There was rejoicing over the birth of the child at Bethlehem which Ruth bare to Boaz : " and Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it." It would seem as if there was already a kind of joyous

foretaste of the birth and infancy which, in after-times, was to be forever associated with the name of Bethlehem. It was the first appearance on the scene of what may by anticipation be called even then the Holy Family, for that child was Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. Stanley.

In some sense this is the Christmas story of the Old Testament, of which the scene is also laid in Bethlehem. There is the same simple surrender on the part of the mother, the same earnest and true Israelitish spirit on that of Boaz, as of the foster-father of Jesus. And the child is one in whom Jew and Gentile meet. All is unexpected, all is God directed ; and the joy with which Bethlehem greets the new-born infant finds its wider fulfilment in him who is David's better Son. A. E.

Naomi has some human light again in her landscape ; she will see the children's children, and take them by the hand into the coming barley-harvests ; she will have some appropriate hopes and joys and interests still. Life to her will not be desolate, because she has still a God above her and a world around her to call forth interest and hope. So it ever is. Trust in the Lord, and you shall never want any good thing. W. M. S.

18-22. In this genealogy there is evidently an omission of some names between Nahshon and Salmon or Salmon and Boaz, because if Nahshon were the grandfather of Boaz we should have only two generations for two hundred and fifty years, the period which intervened between the death of Moses and the time of Gideon. It is probable also that there are omissions in the earlier part of the list, because from Perez to Nahshon are only five generations, including both extremities, and these are too few for a period of at least four hundred and thirty years. The Jews were accustomed to omit unimportant names in their genealogies. W. L. A.

The story of Ruth is an exquisite study, not of mere righteousness and conscientiousness, but of love operating spontaneously and benevolently out beyond the requirements of law and the prescribed bounds of duty. It is a history of righteousness ripened to self-sacrificing loveliness. In it all questions of law and duty are outstripped and outshone by the unwritable law of kindness. Not once does any leading character in the book fall back upon his or her own rights, or consent to do this or that for mere conscience' sake. At every turn, law is swallowed up in love. Naomi, for love of her

daughters-in-law, renounces all supposable claim upon them ; but Ruth, for love of Naomi, will not be released. And so on to the book's end. Every line is fragrant with the unselfish activity that cannot stop at righteousness. The lesson is a great one, especially when taken with those that have forerun it. As long as we are satisfied to be merely just and righteous, we shall never be so. Self will always somewhere block the way, saying with Naomi's nearer kinsman, "I cannot, . . . lest I mar mine own inheritance." Much less shall we lead the unconverted to God. Whether in preaching or in practice, it is only when, like Naomi and like Boaz, we make God's religion lovely to behold, that the heathen heart responds, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." *Cable.*

The Book of Ruth contains evidence not only of an acquaintance with what is known as the Levirate Law, but also of a conviction of its binding force. That law finds expression in De. 25 : 5. *sqq*, an acknowledged part of the Deuteronomic Code. Acquaintance with this Law is

indicated in the words of Naomi to Orpah and Ruth as well as in those of Boaz to the kinsman, and also in the whole history of which these words form but a part. Again, the Book of Ruth bears evidence to an acquaintance with the law of a *goel*, or redeemer (Lev. 25 : 15), during the time of the judges. In comparing the historic statements in Ruth with this law, there are two facts worth noting : (1) Boaz would not redeem the property of Naomi until he had first "advertised" the nearer *goel*. His summons to the elders indicates the fact that he recognized a well-known prior claim to his own. (2) The *goel* recognized the redemption as his duty and assented to it until he found that it involved acquiescence in the Levirate Law, that in taking the property he must take the wife. How came he to recognize the redemption as a duty; had there not been the obligation of law in it? Thus the short history of the book before us gives its evidence to the existence both of a Levitical and a Deuteronomic Code previous to the later quarter of the fourteenth century before Christ. *N. W. Wells.*

Section 226.

SEVEN YEARS' SERVITUDE UNDER THE MIDIANITES. CALL TO GIDEON.
THIRTY-TWO THOUSAND FROM FOUR TRIBES ASSEMBLE AT HIS SUMMONS.
SIFTED BY A DOUBLE TEST TO THREE HUNDRED MEN.

JUDGES 6 : 1-40 ; 7 : 1-8.

6 1 AND the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD : and the
2 LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed
against Israel : and because of Midian the children of Israel made them the dens which are in
3 the mountains, and the caves, and the strong holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown,
that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east ; they came up
4 against them ; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till
5 thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For
they came up with their cattle and their tents, they came in as locusts for multitude ; both
6 they and their camels were without number : and they came into the land to destroy it. And
Israel was brought very low because of Midian ; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.
7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of Midian,
8 that the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel : and he said unto them, Thus saith
the LORD, the God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the
9 house of bondage ; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand
10 of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land ; and
I said unto you, I am the LORD your God ; ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose
land ye dwell : but ye have not hearkened unto my voice.
11 And the angel of the LORD came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained
unto Joash the Abiezrite : and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide
12 it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him,

13 The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that it is thou that talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and lay it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. And Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! forasmuch as I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the Asherah that is by it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this strong hold, in the orderly manner, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had spoken unto him: and it came to pass, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, so that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the Asherah that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? or will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath broken down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath broken down his altar.

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast spoken. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

7 1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

- 2 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own
3 hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand ; and there remained ten thousand.
- 4 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many ; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there : and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee ; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall
5 not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water : and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself ; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees
6 to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men : but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.
- 7 And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand : and let all the people go every man unto his place.
- 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets : and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men : and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

The ministry of Othniel rescued them from the Mesopotamians ; of Ehud, from the Moabites ; of Shamgar, from the Philistines ; of Barak, from the tyrant of Canaan. But again the people offend ; again they are punished ; the bondage of Israel under Jabin was freedom, in comparison with the yoke of the Midianites. *Bp. H.*

A combination of the tribes of the deserts to the east and south of Palestine, described as "the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the children of the east," invaded the land, pouring in upon Esdraelon from across the Jordan, and flowing onward past Carmel, down upon Sharon and Philistia, having with them their tents and cattle and camels, and settling themselves upon the territory. The Israelites were distressed beyond measure. Their crops were destroyed, their pastures occupied, and they themselves were driven to "the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds." *N. C. B.*

5. As locusts for multitude. The Rev. F. W. Holland says of the locusts, while still young and without wings, that he has seen troops of them, in Palestine, covering the ground for a mile in length and twenty, thirty, or even fifty yards across. When they approach a village in their steady and constant advance, the people turn out, light fires round their fields, dig trenches and fill them with water, and try to beat the swarming thousands back with their cloaks and branches of trees, but in spite of all they swarm up the trees and strip them of every green leaf, and crunch up every blade in the gardens on their line of march. *Tristram.*

7-10. God, having now determined in answer to the prayers of his oppressed people to grant them deliverance, begins by sending them a

prophet before he raises up for them a Saviour. It was fitting that their deep and unfeigned repentance should precede the purposed relief, and a prophet would be the most suitable instrument of effecting this. *Bush.*—Trouble is necessary to soften the hearts of the people and make them willing to listen to the prophet. The prophet does not make any prediction nor give any revelation of God ; he simply reveals his hearers to themselves. The call to repentance consists in recounting the ancient mercy of God, for it is in the light of God's goodness that we see most clearly our own wickedness ; and in directly charging Israel with ingratitude and apostasy. *W. F. A.*—What a condemnation of Israel there was in the simple statement of facts by the mouth of the prophet, without exaggeration and without comment. They had forsaken God, to whom they owed all they had, and they had turned to heathen vanities. They were helpless because they had cast off him who had helped them so wondrously, and who would have been their help in every time of need if they had not so wantonly forsaken him. *A. C. H.*

The Call of Gideon.

11. When this invasion had accomplished its providential purpose, Gideon, a man of Manasseh, living at Ophrah, somewhere in the hill country on the south border of Esdraelon, was called of God to the work of freeing his country from the invader. *N. C. B.*—As in the other invasions and oppressions, so here, the deliverer is to be sought in the locality nearest to the chief scene of the invasion. Overhanging the Plain of Esdraelon, where the vast army of the Midianites was encamped, were the hills of the Western Manasseh. It was from a small family

of this proud tribe that the champion of Israel unexpectedly rose. *Stanley.*

Its head or chief was *Joash*—"Jehovah strength," or "firmness." As such he was lord of Ophrah. In such names the ancient spiritual faith of Israel seems still to linger amid the decay around. And now, under the great oak by Ophrah, suddenly appeared a heavenly stranger. It was the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of the Covenant, who in similar garb had visited Abraham at Mamre. A. E.—That he was not a mere created angel, is plain from the incommunicable name Jehovah, which he assumes, and by which he suffers himself to be frequently called (verses 14, 16, 23, 24, etc.). Therefore, the Jews, according to their Targum, which styles him the *word of the Lord*, look upon this angel not merely as a heavenly messenger sent from God, but as the Son of God himself, appearing in the form of an angel. *Patrick.*

13. Gideon, as if not conscious to himself of anything great or encouraging in his own spirit, fastens only on the assurance the angel had given him of God's presence, as that by which they held all their comfort. The angel spake in particular to him, *The Lord is with thee*, but he expostulates for all, *If the Lord be with us*; herding himself with the thousands of Israel, and admitting no comfort but what they might be sharers in; so far is he from the thoughts of monopolizing it, though he had so fair an occasion given him. H.

The Angel immediately gained what the Angel of His Presence *always* first gains—the confidence of Gideon's heart. To the unknown stranger he pours forth his inmost doubts, sorrows, and fears. It is not that he is ignorant of Jehovah's past dealings, nor that he questions His present power, but that he believes that if Jehovah had not withdrawn from Israel their present calamities could not have rested upon them. The conclusion was right and true, so far as it went; for Israel's prosperity or sufferings depended on the presence or the absence of Jehovah. Thus Gideon's was in truth a confession of Israel's sin, and of Jehovah's justice. It was the beginning of repentance. But Gideon had yet to learn another truth—that Jehovah would turn from His anger if Israel only turned to Him; and yet another lesson for himself; to put personal trust in the promise of God, based as it was on His covenant of love, and that whether the outward means to be employed seemed adequate or not. A. E.

14-16. As the chosen instrument for delivering Israel, Gideon *must be prepared*. And two things were necessary in the first place: one to awaken in him a thorough trust in God; the other

to inspire him with a proper trust in himself, springing from his trust in God. And so the angel began at once with the startling words, "The Lord is with thee." And the answer of doubt and despair from the lips of Gideon was met by a turning of God's face upon him, and a word of further encouragement: "Go in this thy might; . . . have not I sent thee?" and again he said, "Surely I will be with thee!" And the scene that followed—the tarrying of the angel till his return with the kid and the unleavened cakes; the solemn sacrifice on the altar of rock; the outstretched staff in the angel's hand touching the flesh and the cakes; the bursting forth of the fire from the rock; the word of comfort, Peace be unto thee! and the disappearance of the angel as mysteriously as he came—was all directed to the same end, to work in Gideon's mind the deepest possible conviction that God was with him, and that the whole love and power of the Almighty was on his side. But it was also necessary to inspire him with a proper trust in himself. As long as he thought of himself only as a thresher of wheat, a skulker by the wine-press; as long as he had no hope, no spirit, he would and could do nothing great. The man, the warrior, the captain, the deliverer, the hero, the martyr, must be aroused within him. And so the voice of God addresses him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Go in thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite Midian as one man." And if these words fell, as no doubt they did, upon a spirit already chafed with a sense of his country's degradation; if burning thoughts of shame and humiliation were smouldering in his mind as he threshed his wheat in secret, how would these words of homage and respect from the mysterious stranger awaken his soul to a new estimate of his place in the world. It was no longer a time to hide and despair and complain, it was a time to rise and act, to dare and risk, and he was the man to be at the head of this new movement. This was Gideon's preparation. *Bp. Harvey.*

17. As Moses, being sent on the same errand, desired a sign, whereby Israel might know that God sent him; so Gideon desires a sign from this bearer to know that this news is from God. *Bp. H.*—The commission being given him out of the common road of providence, he might reasonably expect it should be confirmed by some act of God out of the common course of nature. H.—The sole doubt now left Gideon proposed to solve by "asking for a sign," yet not a sign to his unbelief, but one connected

with worship and with sacrifice. Jehovah granted it. A. E.

21. He that came without entreating would not have departed without taking leave, but that he might increase Gideon's wonder, and that his wonder might increase his faith. His salutation therefore was not so strange as his farewell. This messenger touches the stone with his staff, and brings forth fire, and presently vanishes, that he may approve himself a spirit. And now Gideon, when he had gathered up himself, must needs think: "He that can raise fire out of a stone can raise courage and power out of my dead breast; he that by this fire hath consumed the broth and flesh can by the feeble flame of my fortitude consume Midian." *Bp. II.*

25, 26. Gideon was commanded to take his father's "second bullock of seven years old," and, having overthrown the altar of Baal, and cut up the *Asherah*, or wooden image of the goddess Ashtoreth, to use its fragments for burning the bullock as a sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah. P. S.—First must Baal's altar be ruined, ere God's be built: the true God will have no society with idols, neither will allow it us. As one whose holy jealousy will abide no worship till there be no idolatry, he first commands down the monuments of superstition, and then enjoins his own service: the wood of Baal's grove must be used to burn a sacrifice unto God. *Bp. H.*

27. It is not to be inferred that Gideon feared the resentment of his kindred or neighbors, or that he shrunk from any danger connected with the undertaking; but as a matter of policy and prudence, he saw fit to engage in the enterprise by night, when he would be least exposed to interruption or opposition from the votaries of Baal.

30. Bring out thy son that he may die. These degenerate Israelites do not scruple to call upon Joash to deliver up his own son to death, for aiming to suppress practices, which, if the law had had its course, would have subjected them to death. *Bush.*—**31.** But Joash replied by the argument, so conclusive against idols, and so often since repeated both in word and deed, "Let Baal plead his own cause." The citizens seem to have shared the conviction which led Joash to take his son's part; and Gideon's new name of Jerubbaal, that is, *Let Baal plead*, at once commemorated the triumph of the day, and became a watchword to deride the impotence of the false gods. P. S.—The drift of Joash is to represent to Baal's votaries how absurd it is for them to undertake to avenge the insult done to their idol, when if he were a

god, as they thought him to be, he would assuredly have taken the matter into his own hands and punished the offender on the spot without suffering him to see the light of the morning. *Bush.*

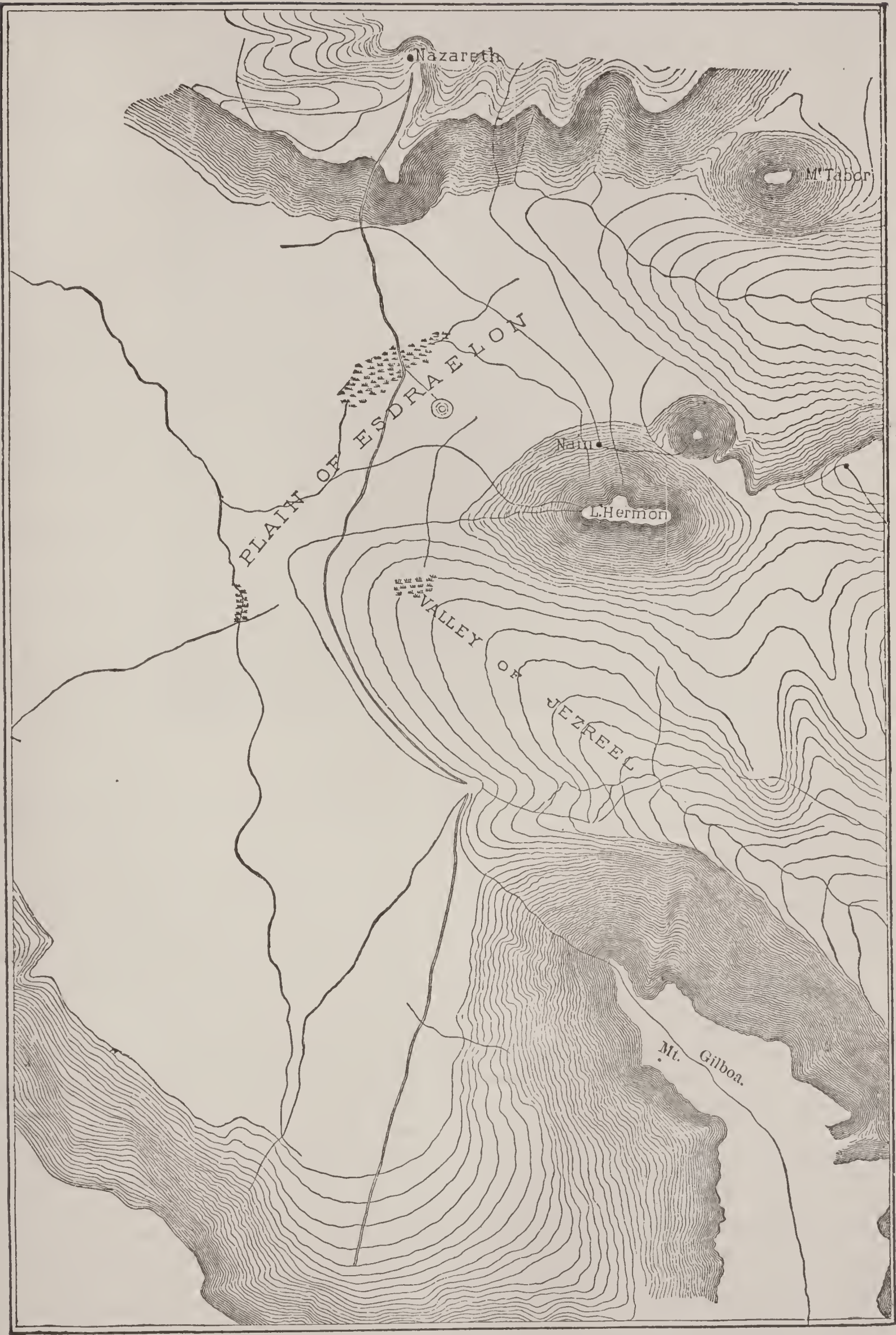
32. Called him Jerubbaal. Gideon is the noblest of the judges. Courage, constancy, and caution are strongly marked in his character. The youngest son of an obscure family in a small tribe, he humbly shrinks from the task imposed on him,—not from cowardice or indolence, but from conscious weakness. Men who are worthy to do such work as his are never forward to begin it, nor backward when they are sure of God's will. He began his war against Midian by warring against Baal, whose worship had brought the oppressor. If any thorough deliverance from the misery which departure from God has wrought is to be effected, we must destroy the idols before we attack the spoilers. Cast out sin, and you cast out sorrow. So he first earns his new name of Jerubbaal (*Let Baal plead*), and is known as Baal's antagonist, before he blows the trumpet of revolt. The name is an omen of victory. The hand that had smitten the idol, and had not been withered, would smite Midian. Therefore that new name is used in the next chapter, which tells of the preparations for the fight and its triumphant issue. A. M.

Summons to Particular Tribes. Prayer of Gideon.

33. Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites—went over. They passed over the Jordan and crossed the country as far as to the borders of Manasseh and Issachar, and pitched in the "plain" (rather than the "valley") of Esdraelon, anciently called Jezreel. *Bush.*

34. The Spirit came. In the Old Testament, the Spirit's work in the Divine kingdom is that of *endowing the organs of the theocracy with the gifts required for their calling*, and those gifts of office in the Old Testament are similar to the gifts of grace in the New Testament. The Spirit bestows on Moses and the seventy elders skill to guide the people, also to Joshua, and works at a later period in the judges, arousing and strengthening them, and comes on the kings, who were called of God, at their anointing. O.

32-35. Once more the Midianitish Bedawin had swarmed across Jordan; once more their tents covered the plain of Jezreel. Now or never—now, before their destructive raids once more began, or else never under Gideon—must Israel arise! Yet not of his own purpose did he move. In the deeply expressive language of Scripture:



PLAIN OF ESDRAELON, AND JEZREEL.

"The Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon," like a garment round about, or rather like an armor. Only after that he blew the trumpet of alarm. First, his own clan Abiezer "was called after him." Next, swift messengers bore the tidings all through Manasseh, and that tribe gathered. Other messengers hastened along the coast (to avoid the Midianites) through Asher northward to Zebulun and Naphtali, and they as well as Asher, which formerly had not fought with Barak, obeyed the summons. A. E.

Came up. No doubt Gideon was encamped upon one of the southern hills that overlooked the plain, probably Gilboa, just as Barak was on Mount Tabor (see ch. 8 : 8-12). A. C. H.

36-40. Gideon's mind was full of the distress of his people. We find traces of humility, unselfishness, and true patriotism in his character from the first. And the same character which appeared in this answer pervades all Gideon's work. He will do anything that God commands him, but he absolutely refuses to act for himself. Sign after sign he asks at each stage of his work until he has actually met the enemy. He will be sure that the Lord is with him at every turn. This is not cowardice ; it is that true discretion which is the best part of valor—to attempt nothing without the Lord. But with the Lord Gideon will do anything. *Waller.*

All was ready—yet one thing more did Gideon seek. It was not from unbelief, nor yet in weakness of faith, that Gideon asked a sign from the Lord, or rather a token, a pledge of His presence. Those hours in the history of God's heroes, when, on the eve of a grand deed of the sublimest faith, the spirit wrestles with the flesh, are holy seasons. When in such hours the soul in its agony is seen to cast its burden upon the Lord, we feel that we stand on holy ground. In substance, though not in its circumstances, it was the same struggle as that which was waged in the night when Jacob prayed : "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." The "sign" was of Gideon's own choosing, but graciously accorded him by God. It was twofold. On the first night the fleece of wool spread on the ground was to be full of dew, but the ground all around dry. This, however, might still admit of doubt, since a fleece would naturally attract the dew. Accordingly, the next night the sign was reversed, and the fleece alone remained dry, while the ground all around was wet with dew. The symbolical meaning of the sign is plain. Israel was like that fleece of wool, spread on the wide extent of the nations. But, whereas all the ground around was dry, Israel was filled with the dew, as symbol of the Divine blessing.

And the second sign meant, that it was equally of God, when, during Israel's apostasy, the ground all around was wet, and the fleece of Jehovah's flock alone left dry. A. E.

Whenever we read of "dew" in our Bible, we must understand a copious mist shedding small invisible rain, that comes in rich abundance every night about twelve o'clock in the hot weather when west or northwest winds blow, and which brings intense refreshment to all organized life. The abundance of moisture deposited by "this dew," far exceeding that which could possibly come from any dew properly so called, makes the sign given to Gideon, though not a whit the less miraculous, still far more natural than if dew such as we experience was intended. That Jerubbaal should be able to wring "the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water," is perfectly in accordance with the plentiful way in which this "dew" of the Bible still falls. *Neii.*

SIFTING OF GIDEON'S ARMY ; 32,000 TO 300.

(7 : 1-8.)

NOTE.—Do not fail to consult maps and notes on pp. 184, 353. B.

1. Gideon, advancing from the hills of Manasseh on the south, formed his camp on Mount Gilboa, "beside the well," or spring, "of Harod." This probably was the same spring called elsewhere in the history the "fountain which is in Jezreel," by which the Israelites under Saul were encamped, prior to the disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa. Just under the northwestern edge of Mount Gilboa, a mile and a half from the site of the city of Jezreel, is now a large fountain "flowing out from under a sort of cavern, in the wall of conglomerate rock, and spreading at once into a fine limpid pool forty or fifty feet in diameter." This is called by the natives "Ain Jalûd," and is in all probability the "Well of Harod," or "Fountain of Jezreel." N. C. B.—The Ain Jalûd is a fine spring at the foot of Gilboa, issuing blue and clear from a cavern, and forming a pool with rushy banks and a pebbly bottom more than one hundred yards in length. The water is sweet, and there is ample space for the gathering of a great number of men. *Conder.*—"The host of Midian was beneath" Gideon "in the valley." It lay stretched "on the north side" of the Israelites, "by the hill of Moreh in the valley." Perhaps a mile and a half or two miles intervened between the foot of Gilboa and the outskirts of the camp of Midian. N. C. B.

7 : 2. And the Lord said. It must be



FOUNTAIN OF JEZREEL.

remembered that this whole movement was essentially a religious one. It began with prayer, it was followed up by repentance, and the great purpose of it was to turn the hearts of the nation back to the God of their fathers. The Lord himself, therefore, graciously forwarded this end by making it plain that the deliverance from their oppression was his work, and his only. A. C. H.

By the result of this enterprise he would afford them convincing proof that the disproportion of numbers formed no apology for their remissness. But chief of all, his purpose is to silence and exclude boasting—"lest Israel vaunt themselves against me." *Bush*.—The numbers must be so reduced that the victory shall be unmistakably God's, not theirs. The same sort of procedure, and for the same reason, runs through all God's dealings. The more unevenly matched are the respective sides, the more plainly does the victory of the weaker demand for its explanation the intervention of God. The old sneer, that Providence is always on the side of the strongest battalions, is an audacious

misreading of history, and is the very opposite of the truth. It is the weak battalions which win in the long run, for the history of every good cause is the same. It is for Israel's sake that he is so solicitous to deliver them from the delusion of their having won the victory. It is because he loves us, and would fain have us made restful, confident, and strong, in the assurance of his fighting for us, that he takes pains so to order the history of his church in the world, that it is one long attestation of the omnipotence of weakness, when his power flows through it. To say, "Not I, but the grace of God in me," is to be serene and of good cheer in the face of outnumbering foes, and sure of victory in all conflicts: therefore God is careful to save us from self-gratulation and self-confidence. A. M.

3. Proclaim in the ears of the people. This was according to a standing enactment of the law (De. 20 : 8), the design of which was to prevent the contagious effects of cowardice or "faint-heartedness," in the army. *Bush*.—God bids him therefore proclaim license for all faint hearts to leave the field. Although it

was not their courage that should save Israel, yet without their courage God would not serve himself of them. Christianity requires men; for if our spiritual difficulties meet not with high spirits, instead of whetting our fortitude, they quell it. *Bp. II.*

When Gideon proclaimed at God's command, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let himself return and depart early from Mount Gilead," twenty-two thousand slunk away. P. S.—The recently published map of the English Palestine Exploration Fund attaches the name Gilead to the northern slopes of the western end of Gilboa, where Gideon was now encamped, and is probably right.

Why were the fearful dismissed? Because fear is contagious; and in undisciplined armies like Gideon's, panic, once started, spreads swiftly, and becomes frenzied confusion. The same thing is true in the work of the Church to-day. Who that has had much to do with guiding its operations has not groaned over the dead weight of the timid and sluggish souls, who always see difficulties and never the way to get over them? Another reason for getting rid of the fearful is that fear is the opposite of faith, and that therefore, where it is uppermost, the door by which God's power can enter to strengthen is closed. We do not need, for our efficiency in Christ's service, complete exemption from fear, but we do need to make the psalmist's resolve ours: "I will trust and not be afraid." Terror shuts the door against the entrance of the grace which makes us conquerors, and so fulfils its own forebodings; faith opens the door, and so fulfils its own confidences.

4. Note the final test. God required but few men, but he required that these should be fit. The first test had sifted out the brave and willing. As Thomas Fuller says, there were "fewer persons, but not fewer men," after the poltroons had disappeared. The second test, a "a purgatory of water," as the same wise and witty author calls it, was still more stringent. The dwindled ranks were led down from their camp on the slopes to the fountain and brook which lay in the valley near the Midianites' camp. A. M.

5, 6. **The water**—viz., of the well or spring of Harod. **That lappeth.** It showed a much more soldierly and self-controlled spirit just to quench the thirst by lapping the water out of the palm of the hand, than to kneel down and drink without stint out of the spring itself. The Lord saw the difference of character indicated by the two actions, and chose his instruments accordingly. A. C. H.—The one part

coming to the fountain in a kind of heedless abandon throw themselves upon the ground and thrust their faces into the water. The other class slake their thirst, yet *keep their feet*, still alert, watchful, ready, self contained, proof against panic, surprise, or any other sudden gust of impulse. Surely they were just the sort of men Gideon wanted for the duty he had planned for them. They would go when sent; would go wherever sent; would not go before; could be trusted absolutely to do their duty. *An.*—They showed that duty and not self-indulgence was uppermost in their minds. They were men of faith, courage, prudence, watchfulness, and self-denial. By such men, be they few or many, God conquers. There has always been, there is now in his Church, such a minority. They are men and women of unfaltering faith, earnest prayer, and loyally devoted to Christ. They can be depended upon in emergencies. Their object is not to indulge themselves in the good of this world, but to do some good in it. They are ready for labor, and count their time, their property, their all, not their own, but God's. "God looks upon them with delight." As they honor him, he honors them. They shall walk with their Lord in white, for they are worthy.

8. **He retained the three hundred men.** All human probabilities are against him. On his side he has nothing but the Word of God. But that word is everything to Gideon. His faith rises to its highest and noblest degree. He had first asked of God signs and tests to confirm the message sent to him. These had been given, and he had full and sufficient warrant for believing that God would deliver Israel through his hand. So God, in turn, tries his faith, and most gloriously does it come through the fiery ordeal. His steadfastness points us to the true ground of success in Christ's work. We must base our confidence, not in numbers, nor in enthusiasm, nor in the instrumentalities we employ, but solely on the word of promise which our Lord has spoken. *Niccolls.*

And the host of Midian. The writer repeats this to give a perfect picture of the situation. The whole army returned to their homes; the three hundred alone with Gideon in the camp; the Midianite host in the plain beneath. A. C. H.—Now, when there is not scarce left one Israelite to every thousand of the Midianites, it is seasonable with God to go in battle. *Bp. II.*

Notice this lesson of sifting with a view to forming a correct estimate of the probable issues of events. Look at any number of men engaged in any

work, secular or religious, that requires steadfastness, tenacity of purpose, fixedness of principle, fortitude to brave danger and meet difficulties, and the probability is that only a small proportion of them will go through with what they have begun. Especially in work done for our Lord Jesus Christ, for the advancement of his kingdom and for the good of his Church, we must look to the few. The men of prayer, the men of earnest faith, are the handful ; but they are the men who will fight the real battle, and who, by grace, will win the real victory. *Hervey.*

Another great lesson taught here is that self-restraint in the use of the world's goods is essential to all true Christian warfare. There are two ways of looking at and partaking of these. We may either "drink for strength" or "for

drunkenness." Life is to some men first a place for strenuous endeavor, and only secondly a place of refreshment. Such think of duty first and of water afterward. To them, all the innocent joys and pleasures of the natural life are as brooks by the way, of which Christ's soldier should drink, mainly that he may be reinvigorated for conflict. Christ calls for self-restraint that we may be fit organs for his power, and bids us endure hardness that we may be good soldiers of his. If we know anything of the true sweetness of his fellowship and service, it will not be hard to drink sparingly of earthly fountains, when we have the river of his pleasures to drink from ; nor will it be painful sacrifice to cast away imitation jewels, in order to clasp in our hands the true riches of his love and imparted life. A. M.

Section 227.

GIDEON'S NIGHT VISIT TO THE CAMP OF MIDIAN. TERROR AND FLIGHT OF THE MIDIANITES. THEIR PURSUIT AND DESTRUCTION BY THE GATHERED TRIBES OF THE NORTH. INCIDENTS THAT FOLLOWED. GIDEON'S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.

JUDGES 7 : 9-25 ; 8 : 1-32.

7 9 AND it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down
10 into the camp ; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou
11 with Purah thy servant down to the camp : and thou shalt hear what they say ; and afterward
shall thine hands be strengthened to go down into the camp. Then went he down with Purah
12 his servant unto the outermost part of the armed men that were in the camp. And the
Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like
locusts for multitude ; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the
13 sea shore for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a
dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread
tumbled into the camp of Midian, and came unto the tent, and smote it that it fell, and turned
14 it upside down, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing
else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel : into his hand God hath delivered
Midian, and all the host.
15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof,
that he worshipped ; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise ; for the LORD
16 hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men
into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers,
17 with torches within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise :
and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall
18 ye do. When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also
on every side of all the camp, and say, For the LORD and for Gideon.
19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the
camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch : and they
20 blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three
companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands,
and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal : and they cried, The sword of the LORD

21 and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp . and all the
 22 host ran ; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight. And they blew the three hundred
 trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host : and
 the host fled as far as Bethshittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abelmeholah, by
 23 Tabboth. And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher,
 24 and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian. And Gideon sent messengers throughout
 all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and take before them the
 waters, as far as Beth-barah, even Jordan. So all the men of Ephraim were gathered together,
 25 and took the waters as far as Beth-barah, even Jordan. And they took the two princes of
 Midian, Oreb and Zeeb ; and they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the
 winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian : and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to
 26 1 Gideon beyond Jordan. And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served
 2 us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with Midian ? And they did
 chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I now done in comparison of
 3 you ? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer ? God
 hath delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb : and what was I able to
 do in comparison of you ? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.
 4 And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were
 5 with him, faint, yet pursuing. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves
 of bread unto the people that follow me ; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and
 6 Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and
 7 Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army ? And Gideon said,
 Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will
 8 tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. And he went up thence to
 Penuel, and spake unto them in like manner : and the men of Penuel answered him as the men
 9 of Succoth had answered. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come
 again in peace, I will break down this tower.
 10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thou-
 sand men, all that were left of all the host of the children of the east : for there fell an hundred
 11 and twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that
 dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host ; for the host was secure.
 12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled ; and he pursued after them ; and he took the two kings of
 13 Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. And Gideon the son of Joash
 14 returned from the battle from the ascent of Heres. And he caught a young man of the men
 of Succoth, and inquired of him : and he described for him the princes of Succoth, and the
 15 elders thereof, seventy and seven men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said,
 Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom ye did taunt me, saying, Are the hands of
 Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are
 16 weary ? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with
 17 them he taught the men of Succoth. And he brake down the tower of Penuel, and slew the
 18 men of the city. Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they
 whom ye slew at Tabor ? And they answered, As thou art, so were they ; each one resembled
 19 the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, the sons of my mother : as the
 20 LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his
 firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword : for he feared, because he
 21 was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us : for as the
 man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the
 crescents that were on their camels' necks.
 22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and
 23 thy son's son also : for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto
 them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you : the LORD shall rule over
 24 you. And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me
 every man the earrings of his spoil. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmael-
 25 ites) And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and
 26 did cast therein every man the earrings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden earrings
 that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold ; beside the crescents, and
 the pendants, and the purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains

27 that were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah : and all Israel went a whoring after it there : and it became a snare unto 28 Gideon, and to his house. So Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, and they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. And Gideon had three- 30, 31 score and ten sons of his body begotten : for he had many wives. And his concubine that 32 was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, and he called his name Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

9-11. Gideon had asked signs of God—and had been forgiven ; and now, again, God gives him another sign suited to strengthen his faith—beautifully illustrating the Divine consideration for the frailty of man. He receives an intimation to go down by night to the very camp of the Midianites, and he is told to take with him Phurah his armor-bearer. *Kd.*—He is bidden to go down and hearken to what *they* said, that he might the more firmly believe what *God* said. *H.*

12-14. There is such pictorialness and truthfulness of detail about all this narrative, that we almost seem to see the events enacted before us. That camp of Bedouins, like locusts in number—with their wives, children, and camels, like the sand by the sea-shore ; then the watch-fire by which they keep guard ; the talk over the camp fire ; the dream so peculiarly Bedouin, and its rapid interpretation no less characteristically Eastern—and yet the while all ordered and arranged of God—while that small band of three hundred Israelites lies concealed on the neighboring height, and Gideon and his “ young man ” are close by, behind the great shadows which the watch fire casts, hidden perhaps in the long grass ! Then the dream itself ! It was all quite natural, and yet most unnatural. The Midianites—especially the advanced-guard that lay nearest to Israel, could not be ignorant that Gideon and his host occupied yonder height. Fame would spread, probably exaggerate, the “ mighty valor ” of Gideon and the valor of his followers—while the diminished numbers of Gideon would not be known, as they had retired by circuitous routes. Moreover, the Midianites must also have been aware that this was to Israel a religious war ; nor can they have been ignorant of the might of Jehovah. The fears which all this inspired appear in the interpretation of the dream. But the dream itself was the result of the same feelings. Barley-bread was deemed the poorest food ; yet a loaf of this despised provision of slaves rolls itself into Midian's camp, strikes the tent of the leader, turns it upside down, and it falls ! Here is a dream-picture of Israel and its victory—all quite

natural, yet marvellously dreamed and told just at that peculiar time. Throughout this history how often what seemed to happen quite naturally was used by God miraculously, and how the supernatural linked itself to what, more or less, had its counterpart in the ordinary course of nature. It had been so in the history of Moses and of Israel ; it was so when Joshua defeated the allied kings before Gibeon, and when Barak encountered the invincible chariots of Sisera. In each case it was the Lord, who gave miraculous victory through terrific tempest. *A. E.*

15. He gave God the glory of it ; he worshipped immediately, bowed his head, thanked God for the victory he was now sure of, and for this encouragement to expect it. *H.*

16-18. Now, when we would look that Gideon should give charge of whetting swords and sharpening spears, he only gives order for empty pitchers and lights and trumpets. The cracking of these pitchers shall break in pieces this Midianitish clay : the kindling of these lights shall extinguish the light of Midian : these trumpets sound no other than a soul-peal to all the host of Midian : there shall need nothing but noise and light to confound this innumerable army. *Bp. H.*

19-22. In that night not Israel, but Jehovah is to fight. In one hand each man holds a trumpet, in the other, concealed in a pitcher, a burning torch. Each is to do exactly as the leader. Silently they creep round to three different parts of Midian's camp, and “ stood every man in his place.” The guard has just been relieved, and the new watchers have settled quietly by the watch-fire. Suddenly a single trumpet is heard, then three hundred—here, there, everywhere the sound of war is raised. Now with loud crash three hundred pitchers are broken ; three hundred torches flash through the darkness ; three hundred voices shout : “ The sword for Jehovah and for Gideon ! ” Then is the enemy all around the camp ! No one can say in what numbers. Again and again rings the trumpet-sound ; wave the torches. The camp is roused. Men, women, children,

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camels rush terror-stricken through the dark night. No one knows but that the enemy is in the very midst of them, and that the neighbor whom he meets is an Israelite, for all around still sounds the war-trumpet, flash the torches, and rises the war-cry. Each man's sword is turned against his neighbor. Multitudes are killed or trampled down, a hopeless panic ensues, and ere morning light the site of the camp and the paths of the fugitives toward Jordan are strewn with the slain. A. E.

The overthrow of the hosts of Midian was manifestly the effect of the power of God fighting on their behalf. But yet what marvellous heroism was there in those three hundred! what strength of purpose, what iron-firmness of nerve, to see above thirty thousand of their comrades leave them in the face of the myriads of their foes; to remain quietly at their post, and, when the time came, to leave their camp and pour down into the plain. Their self-possession and self-restraint and absence of self-indulgence in the matter of the water was a true index of the unequalled qualities which they displayed in the sequel. A. C. H.

22-24. The graphic description of the midnight attack can be most readily realized on the spot. The immediate flight of the nomadic horde is easily traced on the map. "The host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah," a course directly down the main road to Jordan and to Bethshan. Thus the immediate pursuit drove the enemy some ten or fifteen miles toward the Jordan banks. A systematic advance immediately followed. Messengers went south two days' journey to Mount Ephraim, and the men of Ephraim descended to the lower fords of Jordan at Bethbarah, which was in all probability situate at the traditional site of the Bethabara of the New Testament,—the pilgrims' bathing-place east of Jericho. C. R. Conder.

25. If we follow the account of the flight of the Midianites, we see that Gideon, after clearing the Bethshan valley of the invaders, crossed the Jordan near *Succoth*, while a part of the Midianites, thus cut off, fled down the west side to cross by the lower fords near Jericho. Here they were intercepted by the men of Ephraim, summoned from the highlands by Gideon's messengers, and "they slew Oreb upon the rock *Oreb*, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of *Zeeb*, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan." In the situation required by the narrative, down the Jordan Valley, overlooking the broad plain north of Jericho, is a sharp peak, still known as

Ash el Ghorab, "the Raven's, or Oreb's peak." Two miles northwest of this is a wady and mound, known as Tuwayl el Diab, "the Wolf's Den," Oreb and Zeeb being simply the Hebrew words for raven and wolf. As the rock and wine-press of Oreb and Zeeb were on the west side of Jordan, there is every reason to accept this identification. H. B. T. (See map, p. 110.)

S : 1-3. The pique here expressed originated in a state of jealous feeling, existing on the part of Ephraim toward Manasseh. Ephraim was brother to Manasseh, the tribe from which Gideon sprung. Their complaint was evidently unjust, as Gideon had acted throughout under Divine direction. Moreover, if so disposed, they had the amplest opportunities to signalize themselves in behalf of the common interest. They knew their country was suffering under foreign oppression, and that forces were raising with a view to resist it and shake off the yoke. What then prevented them from nobly coming forward and volunteering in the enterprise? *Bush.*—Those seek themselves more than God who stand upon a point of honor to excuse themselves from doing real service to God and their generation. H.—There are persons who really feel hurt if they are not asked to help in every good work, and persons who when a good work is in its infancy make no movement to join it, but as soon as it becomes popular come forward and loudly complain that they were never asked to join.

2, 3. We notice the admirable self-command and tact displayed in Gideon's answer to Ephraim. "What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the *gleaning* of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? My household has cut the first-fruits, but what is our harvest in comparison with these rich clusters, the heads of Oreb and Zeeb, the princes of Midian which you have gleaned?" Then their anger was abated toward him when he had said that. *Dods.*—Gideon's character comes out splendidly in this answer. Indisposed to glory, he was willing to give the Ephraimites full credit for their share in the great victory; prudent, and a lover of his country, he saw the immense importance of union among themselves, and the danger of intestine divisions and discord, and so at once met Ephraim's taunts by the soft answer which turneth away wrath. *Hervéy.*

4. Came to Jordan. The narrative goes back to ch. 7 : 24, to follow up the personal history of Gideon, from which the writer had been diverted to relate the result of Gideon's message

to the Ephraimites, which is told in verses 24 and 25, and ch. 8 : 1-3. A. C. H.

Faint, yet pursuing. Gideon's was no easy work in this battle. His limbs were weary running ; his hand was weary slaying ; the way was long and the sun high and hot, when he arrived with his three hundred followers panting and exhausted at Jordan's shore. Bent on their purpose they dashed right into the waters, and stemming the flood passed over, "he and the three hundred men, faint yet pursuing." "Faint, yet pursuing," be that our chosen motto. *An.*—The grand word of the text is "pursuing." To pursue in weakness is even better than to pursue in strength. It shows that the life-purpose has taken full possession of the soul, and that God Himself is inspiring it. *Raleigh.*—It is so weary to go through, day after day, the same resolutions, the same efforts, the same failures, the same repentances. Faint we all of us must often be who are striving with any earnestness against sin, and who are concerned for the numberless varieties of distress exhibited by our fellow-men. But though faint, let us still be pursuing ; not yielding to natural love of ease, nor wearying of the perpetual labor ; but remembering that these wearisome conflicts and efforts ought to be gone through and must be gone through, if we are to be and do what we ought ; remembering how our Lord endured the contradiction of sinners, and resisted unto blood, striving against sin ; and remembering the promises of God, which assure us that in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. *Dods.*

Gideon was not satisfied with imperfect results. He was not stopped in his career by either successes or difficulties. True, he had driven the children of the east across the Jordan. There had been a great slaughter at the rock Oreb, the kings were fugitives, the power of Midian was broken. But Gideon had the future in view. He would not have the plain of Jezreel again the prey to those locusts from the east. And so Midian must be crushed. But could his strength and the strength of his three hundred hold out any longer? The long and hurried march, the hand-to-hand fights, the heat, their hunger and thirst, had nearly exhausted their powers ; they were weary and faint ; might they not now stop and rest? No, their work was not complete ; so though faint they must still pursue. Methinks that as we read this stirring tale of energy and perseverance we must feel ashamed of our own faint-heartedness ; we must feel rebuked at our own readiness to succumb to hindrances or to be con-

tent with half successes ; we must resolve that we will put more energy into our daily work or extraordinary tasks, and that in spite of weariness and discouragement, in the face of hindrances and opposition, we will persevere and carry through to the end whatever work we have in hand of which we are convinced that it is right to do it. This is the lesson here given to us by Gideon—*faint, yet pursuing.* A. C. H.

5-9. Their crime was great. Gideon, with a handful of feeble folk, was pursuing the common enemy, to complete the deliverance of Israel ; his way leads him through the city of Succoth first, and afterward of Penuel ; he only begs some necessary food for his soldiers that were ready to faint for want, who had done great service to their country, and were now doing more ; who were fighting God's battles and Israel's. Nothing could be more just than that they should furnish them with the best provisions their city afforded. But the princes of Succoth refused to answer the just demands of him whom God had raised up to save them, affronted him, despised the success he had already been honored with, despaired of the success of his present undertaking, did what they could to discourage him in prosecuting the war, and were very willing to believe that the remaining forces of Midian, which they had now seen march through their country, would be too hard for him. The men of Penuel gave the same answer to the same request, defying *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*

10, 11. He took none with him but his three hundred, who now betook themselves to their swords and spears. God had said, *By these three hundred men will I save you*, and confiding in that promise Gideon kept to them only. He expected more from three hundred men supported by a particular promise than from so many thousands supported only by their own valor. He made a very long march by *the way of them that dwell in tents*, because that was a road in which he would be least expected, and therefore it would be the greater surprise to them. Now he found it an advantage to have his three hundred men, such as could bear hunger, and thirst, and toil. It should seem he set upon them by night as he had done before, for *the host was secure.* H.

12-17. Gideon returned victorious ; and, fulfilling a threat he had made as he passed in the full confidence of faith—destroyed the tower of Penuel, and chastised the princes of Succoth with the thorny branches of the acacia groves of their valley. The "day of Midian" continued long to be memorable in the history of Israel. In the Psalms (83 : 9-11), two or three centuries

after, we find the discomfiture of the host of Midian, and especially the destruction of Oreb and Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna referred to as among the most astounding of God's judgments on his enemies. Even at the interval of five hundred years, the prophet Isaiah drew from the day of Midian (ch. 9 : 4) and the rock of Oreb (ch. 10 : 26) an emblem of the destruction that was to be brought upon the terrible hosts of Assyria. Gideon is celebrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews as one of those heroes of faith whose reliance on the arm of Jehovah was the secret of their glorious success. W. G. B.

18, 19. An incident not before related is here brought to light, that on some unknown occasion Zebah and Zalmunna had put to death Gideon's brothers. We may observe in passing how characteristic this is of a true narrative in which everything that happened cannot possibly be related. A. C. H.

What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? The inference is that these brothers of Gideon, during the seven years' oppression of Midian, when the children of Israel had been compelled to make themselves dens in the mountains, had taken shelter in Mount Tabor, where they were found by these two kings and killed in cold blood. *Bush.*

21. As "judgment began" with the men of Succoth and Penuel, who were of Israel, "the house of God;" so it next fell with heaviest weight on the godless heathen enemy. Zebah and Zalmunna paid with their own blood for the innocent blood which they had shed long previously. A. R. F.

22, 23. He was mindful of what they had forgotten; and to their invitation, "Rule thou over us," his prompt answer—in the true spirit of the theocracy, was, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." Considering that the love of power is one of the strongest passions in man, and that Gideon was the father of a large family of promising sons whose advancement might seem a reasonable object of paternal solicitude—this refusal, solely on principle, to become the first monarch of the Hebrew state, deserves to be ranked with the most illustrious examples of patriotic self-denial which history has recorded. *Kit.*—There is no greater example of modesty than Gideon. When the angel spake to him, he abased himself below all Israel; when the Ephraimites contended with him, he prefers their gleanings to his vintage and casts his honor at their feet; and now when Israel proffers him that kingdom which he had merit-

ed, he refuses it. He that in overcoming would allow them to cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," in governing, will have none but "the sword of the Lord." *Bp. H.*

24-27. *Gideon's costly ephod* Presuming, probably, on his having been permitted to build an altar and to offer sacrifice, he made a jewelled ephod, adorned with seventeen hundred shekels of gold, which the people gave him from their share of the spoils of Midian, besides the ornaments he had taken from off the kings and their camels. The Israelites came from all quarters to consult the ephod, and Gideon and his house were thus enticed into a system of idolatrous worship. P. S.—Even in his lifetime, it unquestionably had the effect of withdrawing the attention of the people, east of the Jordan, from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and so far tended to pave the way for that decline into positive idolatry, which took place after his death. *Bush.*

This oracle of Gideon's own contrivance, made out of the golden amulets of idolaters, was a bad return to make for the Divine favor in granting him victory. It "became a snare unto Gideon" himself, by lessening his zeal for the house of God in Shiloh. Still more so to his family.

30, 31. Besides his error in making an ephod, he committed another evil in multiplying wives; and worse even than this, in connecting himself with a concubine and a Canaanitess. She it was, probably, who moved him to call their son by the name of the Canaanite king, Abimelech—a presage of the kingship which she coveted for her son. A. R. F.

This notice helps us to fill up the picture of Gideon's state after the Midianitish victory. He was judge over Israel for forty years, with a household like a great prince, living in his paternal city, with the ephod set up there, himself the centre round which the powers of Church and State gathered; directing the affairs of his country, both civil and ecclesiastical, with eminent success. The good government by which he gave rest to the land for forty years, and the continued repression of Baal-worship as long as he lived, are all evidences that he maintained his integrity before God, and never forfeited his claim to be a servant of God; and it is in entire agreement with this view that we read that he "died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father," words by which the sacred historian evidently means to set before us the picture of one who, under God's favor, was happy in his death, as he had been in his life. The faith in God which had carried him down to the Midianite camp, though it may have been dimmed, was never extinct. The

communion with God, if less fresh and less constant, was never wholly interrupted. He remains to us as one of the most remarkable characters of the Old Testament, not without faults and blemishes and not wholly unspoiled by prosperity, but still a great man, and an eminent servant of God. A. C. H.

Matters changed immediately upon his death. Presently the worship of Baalim becomes again

common, and especially that of the "Covenant-Baal" (Baalberith). There is a sad lesson here. If Gideon had made a spurious ephod, his people now chose a false "covenant-god." And, having first forsaken the Covenant-Jehovah, they next turned in ingratitude from their earthly deliverer, "neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal." Thus sin ever brings its own punishment. A. E.

Section 228.

ABIMELECH MADE KING BY SHECHEMITES. FABLE AND CURSE OF JOTHAM.
THE WICKEDNESS OF ABIMELECH AND OF THE MEN OF SHECHEM RE-
QUITED BY GOD.

JUDGES 8 : 33-35 ; 9 : 1-57.

§ 33 AND it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again,
34 and went a whoring after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of
Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their
35 enemies on every side : neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *who is* Gideon,
according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

¶ 1 And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren,
and spake with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,
2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, that all
the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, rule over you, or that one rule
3 over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren
spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words : and their hearts inclined
4 to follow Abimelech ; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him threescore and
ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light
5 fellows, which followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his
brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone : but
Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left ; for he hid himself.

6 And all the men of Shechem assembled themselves together, and all the house of Millo,
7 and went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem. And
when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up
his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God
8 may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them ; and they
9 said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I
leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to wave to and fro over
10, 11 the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig
tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to wave to and fro
12, 13 over the trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And
the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to
14 wave to and fro over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and
15 reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you,
then come and put your trust in my shadow : and if not, let fire come out of the bramble,
13 and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if ye have dealt truly and uprightly, in that
ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have
17 done unto him according to the deserving of his hands ; (for my father fought for you, and
18 adventured his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian : and ye are risen up against
my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one
stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem,

19 because he is your brother ;) if ye then have dealt truly and uprightly with Jerubbaal and
 20 with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you : but if
 not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of
 Millo ; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and
 21 devour Abimelech. And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for
 fear of Abimelech his brother.

22 And Abimelech was prince over Israel three years. And God sent an evil spirit between
 23 Abimelech and the men of Shechem ; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with
 24 Abimelech : that the violence done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come,
 and that their blood might be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them, and upon
 56 the men of Shechem, which strengthened his hands to slay his brethren. Thus God requited
 the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren :
 57 and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem did God requite upon their heads : and upon
 them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Verses 25-49. *Conflict between Abimelech and the Shechemites, in which the latter are destroyed.*

Verses 50-55. *Abimelech is killed by a stone from the tower of Thebez, in the midst of an assault.*

8 : 33-35. Again the record of Israel's *forgetfulness and ingratitude*. As we pass through the historical records of the Bible we are often struck with the stern faithfulness with which Jewish chroniclers describe the wicked and shameful deeds of their own nation. This fact is not only valuable as a proof of the unvarnished truthfulness of the narratives ; it gives to the history of the Bible a universal character by making it a mirror of human nature. The forgetfulness and ingratitude here recorded are typical of the conduct of mankind in every age. W. F. A.

9 : 1-6. Abimelech, the meanest and basest of Gideon's sons, and a man of desperate and ambitious designs, becomes the instrument to punish the degenerate Israelites. He retires to his mother's family at Shechem, in the tribe of Ephraim, where by their interest he prevailed upon the men of the place to consent to make him king ; upon the insinuation that every one of the seventy sons of Gideon would be ambitious of the government, either singly or jointly ; and it would be much better to have *one* rather than so *many* monarchs ; and who so proper for *them* as one of their own *tribe* and relations ? Pyle.—Those that are most unworthy of honor are hottest in the chase of it. Fair words won his brethren ; they, the Shechemites : the Shechemites furnish him with money ; money with men : his men begin with murder ; and now Abimelech reigns alone : flattery, bribes, and blood, are the usual stairs of the ambitious. The money of Baal is a fit hire for murderers : that which idolatry hath gathered is fitly spent upon treason. Soon is Abimelech seated in the throne which his father refused, and no rival is seen to envy his peace. But how long will this glory last ? Stay but

three years, and ye shall see this bramble withered and burned. The prosperity of the wicked is short and fickle. *Bp. H.*

5. Upon one stone. Used as a block, on which the victims were executed one after another. Compare the similar wholesale murders of the seventy sons of Ahab by order of Jehu (2 K. 10 : 7), of the seed royal of Judah by Athaliah (2 K. 11 : 1), of the whole house of Jeroboam by Baasha (1 K. 15 : 29), of the whole house of Baasha by Zimri (1 K. 16 : 11, 12). In Persia and Turkey in modern times it has been a common practice for the sovereign to slay or put out the eyes of all his brothers and cousins. So destructive of natural affection is polygamy, and so cruel is power. Abimelech's kingdom, thus founded in bloodshed, abetted by falsehood, and fostered by a base and cruel policy, had no end or motive but self-aggrandizement.

7. On the top of Mount Gerizim. Mount Gerizim rises on the southwest side of Shechem as a sheer rock about 800 feet in height, facing Mount Ebal, which is separated from it by the narrow valley, "some 500 yards wide," in which Shechem, now Nablûs, is built. It was from Mount Gerizim that Joshua, in accordance with the directions given by Moses, caused the blessings of the law to be proclaimed, after the capture of Ai, while the curses were proclaimed from Mount Ebal. A. C. H. (See pp. 83-88.)

While they pledged the king beneath the sacred oak, there occurred a singular and ominous interruption to their mirth. A voice was heard high in the air, and looking up they see Jotham, the one son of Gideon who had escaped the slaughter, standing on Mount Gerizim. He is there to denounce the cruel worthless man who has destroyed his father's house, and to rebuke



JOTHAM'S SPEAKING-PLACE ON GERIZIM.

the men of Shechem with their crime in electing him their king. The wooded scene before him gives form to his thoughts. He cries, "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you." *Cox.*

Behind the town the slope of Gerizim is broken into several bold cliffs, which have the appearance of overhanging the town, and from the top of one of these, whence escape to the mountains behind would be easy, we can readily picture Jotham delivering his striking fable. *Wilson.*—The people in these mountainous countries are able, from long practice, so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most minute directions, which are perfectly understood; and in doing this they seem to speak very little louder than their usual tone of conversation. Jotham, therefore, might easily be heard by the greater part of the inhabitants of Shechem. The costume of his allegory is simple and natural, and the allusions are to the very trees which most abound at Nablûs, the olive, the fig,

the vine, and the bramble. *Thompson.*—The place was very skilfully chosen by Jotham; for while his fable could be heard by the citizens, those who were irritated by it when its drift and meaning came at last to be seen, would need to make a long circuit before they could reach the spot where he was, and he would have abundance of time to flee and escape, as we know he did. *Thomson.*

The youngest son of Gideon, Jotham, seems to have inherited the hereditary wit of the family, so conspicuous in Gideon and in his father. He must also have inherited his father's cool courage and daring; a courage which enabled him to collect his thoughts in the midst of imminent danger, and to utter them in circumstances which would have caused the voice of most men to tremble. *Dods.*

The proper parable is an imaginary scene from real life vividly set forth, in order to bring some truth home to the hearts and consciences of men. It is a brief drama, not resting, like the fable, on some extravagant fiction as its groundwork, nor condensed, like the proverb,

into a single pithy phrase or striking image ; but dependent for its effect on the naturalness and probability of the story, and on the life-like manner in which it is told. I find but one parable properly so called in the whole of the Old Testament, and that is the brief and touching apologue of the one ewe lamb, with which the prophet Nathan rebukes the crying sin of David. This lively fiction of the talking trees is not a parable but a fable, altogether in the manner of Pilpay and Esop. *Bowen.*

8-13. In the reason which all these fruit trees gave for their refusal, it is intimated, *first*, that government involves a man in a great deal both of toil and care ; he that is promoted over the trees must go up and down for them, and make himself a perfect drudge to business. *Secondly*, that those who are preferred to places of public trust and power must resolve to forego all their private interests and advantages, and sacrifice them to the good of the community. The fig-tree must lose its sweetness, its sweet retirement, sweet repose, and sweet conversation and contemplation, if it go to be promoted over the trees, and must undergo a constant fatigue. *Thirdly*, that those who are advanced to honor and dignity are in great danger of losing their fatness and fruitfulness. Preferment is apt to make men proud, slothful, and that spoils their usefulness, wherewith in a lower sphere they honored God and man ; for which reason they that desire to do good are afraid of being too great. *H.*

What strikes the reader most is perhaps the sagacious contentment of the olive, the fig, and the vine—a contentment and dread of change, which reproach us for our restlessness and craving to be always bettering ourselves. This fable also shows how contemptible a thing is display and worldly honor, and what is called style. There is something better in life than mere show or the mere attainment of the rewards accorded by the world to its successful men. The real value of human life does not lie on the surface, lies indeed so deep that many people never see it at all. If a man will only humbly accept what comes to him, and strive to do good as he has opportunity, he will not lack the blessing of God, but will be like the vine that cheereth God and man. *Dods.*—The wine is said to cheer, or make to rejoice, God because the drink offering which accompanied the meat offering consisted of wine (Nu. 15 : 7, 10), and God was well pleased with the offerings of his people. *A. C. H.*

The true political lesson of Jotham's fable is surely this : that the highest places in the State should be given only to the best men ; that the

bramble should never be permitted to usurp the place of the olive or the vine, and that the vine and the olive should not shrink from the duties which their very sweetness and fatness impose upon them. When men of noble character, and great parts, and refined culture withdraw from public life and leave the administration of public affairs to the ignorant and greedy and unscrupulous ; or when men who are worthless as brambles, simply because they have a long purse or a long pedigree (and brambles are at least as old as the curse), are thrust into seats of honor and responsibility—then we may predict, with Jotham, that a fire will break forth from them in which much that we love will be consumed. If Gideon will not rule, and Abimelech will ; or if we are base enough to prefer a base Abimelech before a noble Gideon, we may be very sure that evil will come of it, and not good. *This* is the true political moral of the fable. It is a most religious moral ; for it teaches us that our political duties should be discharged in the fear of God ; it warns us that so often as we help to put a bad man into a good place, we so far forth conspire against the best interests of our country, and are traitors to the common weal. *Cox.*

He exposes the ridiculous ambition of Abimelech, whom he compares to the bramble or thistle. The bramble, a worthless plant, not to be numbered among the trees, useless and fruitless, nay, hurtful and vexatious, scratching and tearing, and doing mischief, it began with the curse, and its end is to be burned. Such an one was Abimelech, and yet chosen to the government by the trees, by all the trees. The bramble being chosen to the government, he takes no time to consider whether he should accept it or not ; but presently, as if he had been born and bred to dominion, assures them that they should find him as he found them. A goodly shadow to trust in ! How unlike to the “ shadow of a great rock in a weary land,” which a good magistrate is compared to (Is. 32 : 2). Come trust in his shadow ! More likely to be scratched if they came near him. Thus men boast of a false gift. Yet he threatens with as much confidence as he promiseth. “ If ye be not faithful, let fire come out of the bramble ; ” a very unlikely thing to spit fire, and devour the cedars of Lebanon ; more likely to catch fire, and be itself devoured. *H.*—Society, in all its sections, is full of bramble men, who are striving for every sort of personal elevation and advantage. The picture in this fable holds up to scorn the principles they act upon. *Raleigh.*

Jotham's intention in the parable is not hard

to trace. His father Gideon, some phase of whose character is set forth in each of the nobler trees, such as the vine, the fig, the olive, and the cedar—the venerated judge, whose sweet temper broke forth in a humor as bright and cheerful as wine, was the hero first chosen by the men of Shechem and the men of Israel to be their king. He had shown himself too wise, too good, too gracious to assume the royal title and to lord it over his brethren. And now, forgetting Gideon's "goodness," they had chosen base Abimelech, mean and worthless as the bramble, and full of cruel thorns, to be their king, although his hands were red with the blood of Gideon's sons. He would prove a true bramble-king to them; out of him there would go forth a fire which would fly from hill to hill, till even distant Lebanon kindled into flame. Cox.

Jotham's fable presages the mutual destruction of Shechem and Shechem's murderous king. God has never left His cause without a witness in the worst times. His providence saved Jotham from the general massacre of his brethren, and then endued him with his Spirit, qualifying him to announce the eternal principles of God's righteousness on which prophecy rests. On the mountain of blessing, he declares the sure curse which must overtake the transgressor—a gloomy omen for a coronation day! The act of bloody fratricide might have forewarned Abimelech's Shechemite brethren, what kind of a "brother" he would be to them, when promoted to be their king. They had been the first to raise him up, and they must be the first to feel the weight of his sceptre. A. R. F.

23, 24. These two verses contain the summary of what is related in detail in the rest of the chapter, and we are told that it all happened providentially, *that the violence done to the sons of Jerubbaal, and their blood, might come to be laid (literally, for some one to lay) upon Abimelech.* A. C. H.—God so ordered things in his providence that they grew jealous and distrustful of each other, and fell into discords and dissensions; by which means he intended to punish Abimelech for the cruel murder of his brethren, and the men of Shechem for assisting him in the commission of that wickedness. *Patrick.*—Their own lusts were evil spirits, they are devils in men's own hearts, from them come wars and fightings. These God gave them up to, and so might be said to *send the evil spirits between them.* The quarrel God had with Abimelech and the Shechemites was for the murder of the sons of Gideon. *That their blood be laid as a burden upon Abimelech that slew them, and the*

men of Shechem that helped him. The Shechemites that countenanced Abimelech's pretensions, aided and abetted him in his bloody projects, and avowed the fact by making him king after he had done it, must fall with him, fall by him, and fall first. Those that combine together to do wickedly, are justly dashed in pieces one against another. Blood cannot be a lasting cement to any interest. H.

25-38. This text contains a graphic narrative of the conspiracy of the men of Shechem, under the leadership of Gaal, against Abimelech. The reading will suffice, as it calls for no comment. B.

39-54. Gaal and his band are discomfited, and he and his adherents are finally expelled from the town. If the Shechemites had thought thus to purchase immunity, they were speedily undeceived. Abimelech was hovering in the neighborhood, and, when the unsuspecting people were busy in their fields, he surprised and slaughtered them, at the same time occupying the city, which was razed to the ground and sowed with salt. Upon this the citizens of the tower, or of Millo, sought refuge in the sacred precincts of "the hall of the god Berith." But in vain. Abimelech set it on fire, and one thousand persons perished in the flames. Even this did not satisfy his revenge. He next turned his forces against the neighboring town of Thebez. Reduced to the utmost straits, its inhabitants fled to the strong tower within the city. Thither Abimelech pursued them. Almost had the people of Thebez shared the fate of the citizens of Millo, when Abimelech's course was strangely arrested. From the top of the tower a woman cast down upon him an "upper millstone." As the Rabbis put it, he, that had slaughtered his brothers upon a stone, was killed by a stone. Abimelech died as he had lived. Feeling himself mortally wounded, ambitious warrior to the last, he had himself run through by the sword of his armor-bearer, to avoid the disgrace of perishing by the hand of a woman. But his epitaph, and that of the men of Shechem who had perished by his hand, had been before written in the curse of Jotham. A. E.

53. Here is an evidence of Divine superintendence in the affairs of men, which to the minutest particular are under the absolute control of Him who reigneth over all, giving that impulse to the woman's heart which led her to throw the stone, and that direction of it to the person of Abimelech which resulted in his death. T. C.

56. Which he did unto his father. It is remarkable that the sacred writer, in call-

ing attention to the righteous vengeance which fell upon the head of Abimelech, marks especially the conduct of Abimelech as undutiful to his father. A. C. H.—See the just succession of the revenges of God ! Gideon's ephod is punished with the blood of his sons ; the blood of his sons is shed by the procurement of the Shechemites : the blood of the Shechemites is shed by Abimelech ; the blood of Abimelech is spilled by a woman. The retaliations of God are sure and just, and make a more due pedigree than descent of nature. Bp. II.—*Thus God punished the wickedness of Abimelech and of the men of Shechem, and performed Jotham's curse, for it was not a curse causeless.* Thus he preserved the honor of his government, and gave warning to all ages to expect blood for blood. The Lord is known by these judgments which he executes, when the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Though wickedness may prosper awhile, it will not prosper always. H.

Under the government of God, though many things happen in the world which seem strange and inexplicable to us upon the theory of God's righteous rule over mankind, yet we have but to be patient and to observe impartially the end of

things, in order to see by many infallible proofs that God is good to those who are of a clean heart, and that the end of the ungodly is that they shall perish. Nor can we afford to lose the evidences of God's righteous judgment. The immediate present fills such a large space in our view ; ungodly mirth, successful wickedness, prosperous iniquity, bold blasphemy, the triumphs of sin, the rewards of selfishness, the impunity of evil livers, parade themselves so ostentatiously in the world, that the steps of our faith in God might easily slip if we did not keep steadily in mind the lessons taught us by the providence as well as by the Word of God. In the marvellous pages of Holy Scripture these lessons are illustrated, exemplified, and enforced with a clearness and a vigor unequalled and unapproached in any writings of man. They culminate in the declaration of the coming of the day of judgment, when God will reward every man according to his works. The observed tendencies of good and evil will then be fully confirmed. Every work will then have its proper recompense of reward : all inequalities will be redressed, the temporary exceptions will disappear, the just procedure will be vindicated to the utmost. A. C. H.

Section 229.

JUDGESHIPS OF TOLA AND JAIR. APOSTASY AND SERVITUDE UNDER THE AMMONITES. JEPHTHAH'S VICTORY AND VOW. CONFLICT WITH EPHRAIM. JUDGESHIPS OF IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON.

JUDGES 10 : 1-18 ; 11 : 1-40 ; 12 : 1-15.

- 10** 1 AND after Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, 2 a man of Issachar ; and he dwelt in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. 3 And after him arose Jair, the Gileadite ; and he judged Israel twenty and two years. 4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called 5 Havvoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Kamon. 6 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baalim, and the Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines ; and they for- 7 sook the LORD, and served him not. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the children of Am- 8 mon. And they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel that year : eighteen years *oppressed* 9 *they* all the children of Israel that were beyond Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is 10 in Gilead. And the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim ; so that Israel was sore distressed. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, even because

11 we have forsaken our God, and have served the Baalim. And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I save you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of 12 Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maon- 13 ites, did oppress you ; and ye cried unto me, and I saved you out of their hand. Yet ye have 14 forsaken me, and served other gods : wherefore I will save you no more. Go and cry unto 15 the gods which ye have chosen ; let them save you in the time of your distress. And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned : do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth 16 good unto thee ; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD : and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

Verses 17, 18. Gathering of Ammon in Gilead and of Israel in Mizpeh.

11 : 1-11. Jephthah, driven out by Gileadites, besought to lead them against the forces of Ammon. They covenant before Jehovah to make him chief over them.

Verses 12-28. Jephthah reasons with the king of Ammon in justification of Israel's right to the land ; but in vain.

29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children 30 of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver 31 the children of Ammon into mine hand, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall 32 be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the 33 children of Ammon to fight against them ; and the LORD delivered them into his hand. And he smote them from Aroer until thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto Abel-cheramim, with a very great slaughter. So the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances : and she was his only child ; beside her he had neither 35 son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter ! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble 36 me : for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD ; do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth ; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for 37 thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me : let me alone two months, that I may depart and go down upon the 38 mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months : and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her vir- 39 ginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed : and she knew 40 no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

12 : 1-6. The men of Ephraim provoke a conflict with Jephthah, and many are slain.

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

8 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons, and thirty 9 daughters he sent abroad, and thirty daughters he brought in from abroad for his sons. And 10 he judged Israel seven years. And Ibzan died, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

11 And after him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel ; and he judged Israel ten years. And 12 Elon the Zebulunite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. And he had forty 14 sons and thirty sons' sons, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts : and he judged Israel 15 eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

10 : 1-5. Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, of the tribe of Issachar, who dwelt at Shamir, in Mount Ephraim, judged Israel twenty-three years. His judgeship may be re- obtained by the victories of Gideon. This is true also of the *eighth judge*, Jair, a man of Gilead, on the east of Jordan, who ruled twenty-two years. P. S.—These forty-five years of comparative rest conclude the second period in the

history of the Judges. The third, which commences with fresh apostasy on the part of Israel, includes the rule of *Jephthah* and his successors—Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon—in the north and east, and of *Samson* in the south and west. While in the north and east Jephthah encountered the Ammonites, Samson warred against the Philistines in the southwest. The oppression of Ammon over the eastern and northern tribes lasted eighteen years (10 : 8, 9); the rule of Jephthah six years (12 : 7); that of his three successors twenty-five years—covering in all a period of forty-nine years. On the other hand, the oppression of the Philistines lasted in all forty years (13 : 1), during twenty years of which (15 : 20) Samson “began to deliver Israel” (13 : 5), the deliverance being completed only twenty years later under Samson, when the battle of Ebenezer was gained (1 S. 7). These dates are of great importance, not only on their own account, but because they show us the two parallel streams of Israel’s history in the north and the south. A. E.

6-16. The whole analogy of this period of the history of Israel leaves no doubt that so long an interval of rest would involve a more serious declension than any of those before it. Accordingly we find them serving all the gods of all the nations around them, “Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, of Sidon, of Moab, of the Beni ammi, and of the Philistines,” except Jehovah; Him they forsook, and served not. This time the punishment was as signal as the crime. Two nations at once attacked Israel on the west and on the east—the Philistines and the children of Ammon. Of the former we shall soon hear again. The oppression of the latter lasted for eighteen years, especially in the land of Gilead, on the east of Jordan. But they also passed the Jordan, and fought against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, so that Israel was sore distressed. P. S.—Next, we have in verses 10-15 an account of Israel’s humiliation and entreaty at Shiloh, and of the Lord’s answer by the Urim and Thummin. Finally, verse 16 informs us how the genuineness of their repentance appeared not in professions and promises, but in the putting away of all “strange gods,” and that when there was no immediate prospect of Divine help. After this, to reproduce the wonderful imagery of Scripture: “His soul became short on account of the misery of Israel.” A. E.

This is the most remarkable repentance and reformation of which we read in the history of the Judges; and it seems to be so serious that, in the time of the three judges who succeeded

Jephthah, we read nothing of their relapsing into idolatry. As their repentance was sincere, so the expression of the Divine compassion toward them—viz., “that his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel,” is the strongest that we meet with. *Stackhouse*.

Repentance involves practical amendment. The children of Israel put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord. The genuineness of repentance must be tested by its effects. Repentance is not a mere feeling of grief; it is not seated in the emotions, but in the will. This must manifest itself in conduct. The conduct will be twofold: the giving up of old evil ways, and the commencement of the service of God. Repentance is followed by tokens of God’s mercy. When the people repented God could no longer endure their misery. He never willingly afflicts. He only waits for our repentance to show his compassion. It is possible then because there is no longer the necessity for continued chastisement; the justice and righteousness of God no longer require him to look upon us in wrath; and we shall not be injured by the kindness which falls upon us in our humiliation, but rather healed and strengthened for a better life by the influence of God’s love. W. F. A.

11 : 1-3. The narrative here goes back probably some years, to explain the antecedents of Jephthah, who was about to play so prominent a part in the ensuing history. Jephthah, we learn, was a son of Gilead by a foreign harlot; and when the sons of Gilead’s wife were grown up, they expelled Jephthah, and refused to let him have any share in the inheritance of their father, because he was the son of a foreigner; Jephthah therefore fled from Gilead, and took up his residence in the land of Tob, apparently an Aramean settlement (2 S. 10 : 6, 8), and presumably the land of his mother’s birth, where he became a famous freebooter. There he was at the time of this Ammonite invasion. A. C. H.

5-11. This life of adventure would suit the brave Gileadite and his followers; for he was a wild mountaineer, only imbued with the true spirit of Israel. And now, when war had actually broken out, “the elders of Gilead” were not in doubt whom to choose as their chief. They had seen and repented their sin against Jehovah, and now they saw and confessed their wrong toward Jephthah, and appealed to his generosity. In ordinary circumstances he would not have consented; but he came back to them, as the elders of Gilead had put it, because they were in distress. Nor did he come in his own strength. The agreement made with the elders

of Israel was solemnly ratified before Jehovah. A. E.

12-28. Jephthah herein conformed to the rule of conduct prescribed by Moses (De. 20 : 10-18), which was, not to make war with nations out of Canaan, till messengers had been sent with proposals of peace. Though a mighty man of valor, yet he was desirous, if possible, to prevent the effusion of blood by a peaceable accommodation. *Bush.*—Jephthah acted fairly when he asked the king of the sons of Ammon to state the grounds on which he invaded Israel, and when on his side he refuted that statement by an historical retrospect of the transactions in question. A. C. H.—The sum of Jephthah's argument, relative to the matter in dispute. The Ammonites had lost their lands in their contests with the Amorites. The Israelites conquered these lands from the Amorites, who had waged an unprincipled war against them. God, the Proprietor and Disposer of heaven and earth, had given these lands by special grant to the Israelites. In consequence of this, they had had possession of them for upward of three hundred years. These lands were never reclaimed by the Ammonites, though they had repeated opportunities to do it, while the Israelites dwelt in Heshbon, in Aroer, and the coasts of Arnon ; but they did not reclaim them, because they knew the Israelites held them legally. Consequently every subsequent claim was effectually barred, and the present pretensions of Ammon were unsupported and unjustifiable. *Bush.*

29. Reasoning and persuasion having failed, Jephthah now appeals to force against Ammon. And in this it appears that he received his commission directly from God. Nothing else can be meant by "then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah." Divine impulse, Divine wisdom, Divine obligation are all implied. It is no longer a war whose main issues and movements are subject to fallible human conditions ; it is really in God's hands. *Muir.*

30. As God began the war with Jephthah, in raising up his heart to that pitch of fortitude ; so Jephthah began his war at God, in craving victory from him and pouring out his vow to him : his hand took hold of his sword ; his heart of God : therefore he whom the Old Testament styles valiant, the New styles faithful ; he who is commended for his strength, dares trust in none but the arm of God ; "If thou wilt give the Ammonites into my hand." If Jephthah had not looked upward for his victory, in vain had the Gileadites looked up to him. This is the disposition of all good hearts ; they look to their sword or their bow as servants, and while

they use them, trust to God. If we could do so in all our businesses we should have both more joy in their success, and less discomfort in their miscarriage. *Bp. H.*

31. The translation of these words may be, "Shall be the Lord's, or else I will offer it up for a burnt-offering," for so the Hebrew particle is often used. The sense of the vow will then be, Whatsoever cometh out of the house to meet me shall be the Lord's ; if it be a human person, servant, etc., it shall be dedicated to his service ; or if it be a beast fit to be offered, it shall be offered for a burnt-offering. *Pyle, Dr. Wall.*

34-40. It has been the subject of endless controversy, whether Jephthah did really offer up his daughter "for a burnt-offering" to the Lord, or only devote her to perpetual virginity, which might be considered as a sacrifice in those times, especially when every woman looked forward to the production of the promised seed. The terms of the vow do not necessarily imply that he really sacrificed her. Human sacrifices were so forbidden by the Jewish law, and declared so abominable to God, that it is scarcely possible to believe Jephthah would have been guilty of so great a crime. Again, the consequence of the vow that "she knew no man," seems to imply that she was devoted to perpetual virginity ; and the excessive lamentations on the occasion may be sufficiently accounted for by the prevailing ideas in those times respecting a state of celibacy. *Stackhouse.*—The prominence given to her "virginity" as the paramount evil in her case favors the opinion that her doom was not death. It was this that she and her female companions bewailed upon the mountains ; this that appears in the record as the consequence of her father's performing his vow : "She knew no man." H. C.—That Jephthah could not possibly have sacrificed his daughter, may appear from the following considerations, among others : (1) The sacrifice of children was prohibited by an express law, under pain of death (Le. 20 : 2, 3). (2) No father, merely by his own authority, could put an offending, much less an innocent child to death upon any account, without the sentence of the magistrates and the consent of the people (De. 21 : 18-21). *Hales.*

It is not expressly stated that she was offered up for a burnt-offering. Instead of saying, as would naturally, on that supposition, have been expected in a transaction of such moment, "He did with her according to his vow, and offered her up for a burnt-offering to the Lord," the writer simply affirms, "He did to her his vow, and

she knew no man ;" as if this were intended to be explanatory of the manner in which the doing of the vow was accomplished—viz., by devoting her to a life of celibacy. Why else is this latter circumstance mentioned, but to show wherein the accomplishment of the vow consisted? If she were really put to death, is it not strange that the fact of her death is not once spoken of? But if she were only doomed to a state of perpetual virginity, the reason of the expression is at once obvious. Moreover, such a sentence would come the nearest of any other to the letter of his vow. She would henceforth become dead to the world, and in her perpetual celibacy the line of his posterity become extinct forever. It would therefore almost amount to a positive immolation of her. It does not appear by whose hands such a sacrifice could have been offered. Not by the high priest, or any regular member of the priesthood, for it is incredible that any officiating priest should have tolerated for a moment, in the face of such explicit prohibitions as Moses had given, the oblation of a human sacrifice. And not by Jephthah himself, for this would have been a transgression of the Levitical law, which enjoined that every offering should be made by the hand of the priest, and at the place where the tabernacle and altar stood. This is rendered still more certain by another important circumstance. It will be remembered that the tabernacle was at this time at Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim. Now immediately after the conclusion of the war with the Ammonites, we find Jephthah engaged in a bitter war with the Ephraimites. This makes it in the highest degree improbable that he should, in the very heat of the quarrel, have gone into the heart of that tribe to offer such a sacrifice, even had it been lawful. From all the circumstances, the probability is very strong that Jephthah availed himself of the provisions of the law in respect to devoted persons and things. Vows were encouraged under the law, and besides the *cherem* or anathema, persons or things might be devoted to God. But where this was the case, the law permitted that a valuation should be made of the devoted person or thing, and that the money should be regarded as a ransom for it, or an offering be presented in its stead. He accordingly, we conceive, consigned her henceforth to a state of perpetual seclusion and celibacy—of living consecration to God—and in this manner "did unto her his vow." Thus, on the whole, after weighing all the circumstances and all the arguments bearing upon the case, upon the much-disputed point whether Jephthah really sacrificed his daughter, the evi-

dence for the negative clearly preponderates. Those who think that she was sacrificed are satisfied with the present version; those who dissent from this, contend earnestly for the marginal rendering, "to talk with"—meaning that the daughters of Israel went yearly to condole with and to comfort her. The evidence for this latter sense of the word is by no means slight, if we refer to the only other instance in which it occurs (Ju. 5 : 11), where though translated "to rehearse," the idea of *colloquy*, of *mutual address*, is clearly involved. This is confirmed by Kimchi, the Jewish commentator, who thus paraphrases the words before us, "That indeed, with their friendly discourse they might comfort her concerning her virginity and her solitary state of life." *Bush.*

On general grounds it seems incredible that a man like Jephthah would be guilty of such an offence, not only against humanity, but against God Himself, as the offering of his child in sacrifice would have been; nor can we conceive that in Israel such an act would have been remembered otherwise than with abhorrence and execration (compare 2 K. 3 : 27). Human sacrifices belong to heathenism only in its most degraded and hateful forms, and in Israel they were utterly unknown until they were brought in with the worship of Moloch by some of the wicked kings of Judah, centuries after the time of Jephthah. What adds to the improbability that Jephthah's daughter was actually offered in sacrifice is the fact that a burnt-offering could be offered only on the altar of the Lord at the Tabernacle; and it is incredible that any priest of the Lord would consent to pollute that altar by a sacrifice of a kind denounced in the law of God as one of the most hateful abominations of the heathen (Le. 18 : 21; De. 12 : 31; 18 : 10; 20 : 1-5). W. L. A.

We must dismiss, as irrelevant and untruthful, such pleas as the roughness of those times, the imperfectness of religious development, or that of religious ignorance on the part of the outlaw Jephthah, who had spent most of his life far from Israel. He acts and speaks throughout as a true worshipper of Jehovah. And his vow, which in the Old Testament always expresses the highest religious feeling, is so sacred because it is made to Jehovah. Again, in his embassy to the king of Ammon, Jephthah displays the most intimate acquaintance with the Pentateuch, his language being repeatedly almost a literal quotation from Nu. 20. He who knew so well the details of Scripture history could not have been ignorant of its fundamental principles. Having thus cleared the way, we observe :

1. That the language of Jephthah's vow implied, from the first, at least the possibility of some human being coming out from the door of his house, to meet him on his return. The original conveys this, and the evident probabilities of the case were strongly in favor of such an eventuality. Indeed, Jephthah's language seems to have been designedly chosen in such general terms as to cover all cases. But it is impossible to suppose that Jephthah would have deliberately *made a vow* in which he contemplated human sacrifice; still more so that Jehovah would have connected victory and deliverance with such a horrible crime. 2. In another particular, also, the language of Jephthah's vow is remarkable. It is, that "the outcoming (whether man or beast) shall be to Jehovah, and I will offer that a burnt-offering." The great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages have pointed out that these two last clauses are *not* identical. It is never said of an *animal* burnt-offering, that it "shall be to Jehovah"—for the simple reason that, as a burnt-offering, *it is* such. But where human beings are offered to Jehovah, there the expression is used, as in the case of the first-born among Israel and of Levi (Nu. 3 : 12, 13). But in these cases it has never been suggested that there was actual human sacrifice. 3. It was a principle of the Mosaic law, that burnt sacrifices were to be exclusively *males* (Le. 1 : 3). 4. If the loving daughter had devoted herself to *death*, it is next to incredible that she should have wished to spend the two months of life conceded to her, not with her broken-hearted father, but in the mountains with her companions. 5. She bewails not her "maiden age," but her "maidenhood"—not that she dies so young, but that she is to die unmarried. The Hebrew expression for the former would have been quite different from that used in Scripture, which only signifies the latter. But for an only child to die unmarried, and so to leave a light and name extinguished in Israel, was indeed a bitter and heavy judgment, viewed in the light of pre-Messianic times. Compare in this respect especially such passages as Le. 20 : 20 and Ps. 78 : 63. The trial appears all the more withering when we realize how it must have come upon Jephthah and his only child in the hour of their highest glory, when all earthly prosperity seemed at their command. The greatest and happiest man in Israel becomes in a moment the poorest and the most stricken. Surely in this vow and sacrifice was the lesson of vows and sacrifices taught to victorious Israel in a manner the most solemn. 6. It is very significant that it is only said, that

Jephthah "did with her according to his vow"—not that he actually offered her in sacrifice, while in the latter case the added clause, "and she knew no man," would be utterly needless and unmeaning. *Lastly*, we may ask, Who would have been the priest by whom, and where the altar on which, such a sacrifice could have been offered unto Jehovah? On all these grounds—its utter contrariety to the whole Old Testament, the known piety of Jephthah, the blessing following upon his vow, his mention in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but especially the language of the narrative itself—we feel bound to reject the idea of any human sacrifice. A. E.

What she, "a bud not allowed to unfold itself," and her companions mourned, was her "virginity," not her being about to be put to death. It would be utterly unnatural that, if she were so soon to die, she his only child should spend two months of her respite far away from her loving father's home. The final words, "and she knew no man," would be superfluous, if her sacrificial death were meant, for already it was stated she was a virgin. But the reason of their insertion is clear, when we understand them as explaining the previous clause, "did with her according to his vow." The sacred historian hereby implies approval of the act, which he would never have bestowed on a literal human sacrifice; contrast his disapproval of a much lighter transgression (8 : 27). Nor would Scripture notice the yearly celebration of the offering of Jephthah's daughter, if that offering had been one so abhorrent to the law. What the daughters of Israel went yearly to "praise" was her willingness to sacrifice for life her natural aspirations as the conqueror's daughter, from motives of filial obedience, patriotic devotion, and self-renouncing piety. Literal burnt-offerings could only be offered at the lawful altar, or before the ark of the tabernacle, and by the Levitical priests. These would never have consented to such an unlawful act. And if Jephthah himself offered it upon an altar of his own, the inspired historian would not have termed it a fulfilment of the vow of a burnt-offering to Jehovah, since it would not have been this, but a sacrifice to the bloody idol Moloch. Jephthah had no right to dispose of his daughter's life without the command of God. Had God commanded him to sacrifice her, which He did not, He would doubtless have interposed to prevent it, as in Isaac's case. A. R. F.

Conflict with Ephraim.

12 : 1-6.

We have already seen Ephraim's proud jeal-

ousy breaking out fiercely in the strife with Gideon, and now again in this hostile attack upon Jephthah. They seem to have thought that they were entitled to be considered first in everything. Their own dignity, and not their country's good, was their chief concern. Hence, when an unknown Gideon, of one of the inferior houses of Manasseh, or a half-caste Jephthah on the other side Jordan, rose to the first rank as saviours of their country, the envy of Ephraim burst out into a flame. A. C. H.

2. And Jephthah said unto them. Jephthah's answer, at once firm but temperate, shows that their charge was as false as malicious; he had called them, and they refused to come. In reality, therefore, he had more cause to condemn them for their indifference to the fate of their brethren than they him for taking the field without them. Reason is very apt to forsake those who renounce right. *Bush.*

6. Say now Shibboleth. To find out whether they spake the truth, they put them to the test of pronouncing the word Shibboleth; which the people of Ephraim were accustomed to speak as Sibboleth. This word was chosen, probably, as being fit for the purpose: *Shibboleth* means *floods of water*; so that the test to which they put them was this, to make them say, "Let us pass over the waters." *Patrick.*

Forty and two thousand. As the Hebrew mode of enumeration is peculiar, the copulative *vau* here may perhaps imply simply *addi-*

tion, so that the sum will be 2040 instead of 42,000. At the last census (Nu. 26 : 37), the whole tribe of Ephraim only amounted to 32,500, compared with which the last number appears far too great; especially as it is reasonable to believe that only a part of the tribe crossed the Jordan on this expedition. *Bush.*

8-15. A bare mention will suffice of the *tenth*, *eleventh*, and *twelfth judges*, who came between Jephthah and Samson. Ibzan, of Bethlehem, in Zebulun, judged Israel for seven years, and was buried in Bethlehem. He was succeeded by another Zebulunite, Elon, who judged Israel ten years, and was buried at Aijalon, in Zebulun, which seems to have been named after him. Abdon, the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, judged Israel for eight years. P. S.

Jephthah's day of life had been a stormy one indeed. But now there came quiet, uneventful days both for Israel and his rulers. There is no mention of foreign foe or of domestic discord. Scenes of family life take the place of the martial muster and the bloody fight. There is nothing to record save how long the judges judged, when they died, and where they were buried. We infer from the fact that there were judges, the continual care of God for his people, and from the absence of invasion and servitude we infer that the people did not forsake God. A. C. H.

Section 230.

THE ANGEL JEHOVAH APPEARS TO MANOAH'S WIFE. HIS SECOND APPEARANCE AND COLLOQUY WITH MANOAH. BIRTH OF SAMSON. HIS MARRIAGE AND EXPLOITS AGAINST THE PHILISTINES.

JUDGES 13 : 1-25 ; 14 : 1-20 ; 15 : 1-8.

13 1 AND the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD ; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was
3 Manoah ; and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not : but thou shalt
4 conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong
5 drink, and eat not any unclean thing : for, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son ; and no razor shall come upon his head : for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb :
6 and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible ; and I asked him not whence he was, neither
7 told he me his name : but he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son ; and

now drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing : for the child shall be a
 8 Nazarite unto God from the womb to the day of his death. Then Manoah entreated the LORD,
 and said, O Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us,
 9 and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the
 voice of Manoah ; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field :
 10 but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and told
 her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me
 11 the *other* day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said
 12 unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman ? And he said, I am. And Manoah
 said, Now when thy words come to pass, what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall
 13 we do unto him ? And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the
 14 woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let
 her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing, all that I commanded her let her
 15 observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, that
 16 we may make ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though
 thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread : and if thou wilt make ready a burnt offering,
 thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was the angel of the LORD.
 17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy words come
 18 to pass we may do thee honor ? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore askest
 19 thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful ? So Manoah took the kid with the meal offering,
 and offered it upon the rock unto the LORD : and *the angel* did wondrously, and Manoah and
 20 his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the
 altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar : and Manoah and his wife
 21 looked on ; and they fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the LORD did no more
 22 appear to Manoah or to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. And
 23 Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said
 unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and
 a meal offering at our hand, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would at this
 24 time have told such things as these. And the woman bare a son, and called his name Sam-
 25 son : and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to
 move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

14 : 1-20 ; 15 : 1-8. *Events connected with his marriage at Timnath with a Philistine woman. The Riddle at the Feast, and its consequences. Faithlessness punished.*

Here at 13 begins the *second* of the two histories (*Jephthah and Samson*) to which the section (ch. 10 : 6-18) is the common introduction. A. R. F.—In 10 : 6, 7, it is said that the Lord was angry with his people, “and sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the children of Ammon.” Of these two servitudes, the last, with the deliverance from it by Jephthah, is treated first. This occupies the two preceding chapters. The historian now returns and takes up the history of the other oppression, and brings it down to the death of Samson. *Bush*.—The Ammonites vexed them on the east, and the Philistines on the west : thus, by the invasion of their enemies on both sides, their punishment increased with their idolatry. The two oppressions happened at the same time ; but, to avoid confusion, Scripture first gives an account of the war with the Ammonites, managed by Jephthah, then of that with the Philistines. *Bp. Patrick*.

13 : 1. The children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight

of the Lord. Their peculiar sin was a direct and emphatic contradiction of the very purpose for which they were severed from the nations round them. Abraham had been called, Isaac blessed, Jacob guarded, Israel multiplied, that there might be one man, one family, one tribe, one people—to bear witness amid the ever-multiplying polytheism to the indivisible unity of the Godhead. For the bearing of this witness it was above all things needful, not only that they should worship Jehovah, but that they should worship none other with Him. This was the sin of polytheism : it forever multiplied its altars. From the deep of his own inner self-consciousness, from the play of his own imagination, from the shadows cast by outward things upon his spirit, fallen man developed his gods, until, not only every high hill and every dark forest, but every desire of his heart and every appetite of his senses was embodied in some deity, who repeated in gigantic proportions the sins which were his own defilement. Against this vast system of abominable idolatry, Abra-

ham's solitary wanderings and his altars to Jehovah, Jacob's sufferings and visions, Joseph's captivity and advancement, the forty years of Moses amid the mountain-chain of Midian, the thunders of Sinai, the sword of Joshua, had all borne alike their various witness. To maintain this witness and to hand it on, Israel had been planted in the goodly land which, to make room for them, had vomited forth its old inhabitants. The adoption, therefore, by them of the Baalim and the Ashtaroth into their system of worship, was a breach of their God-given character—a yielding up of their title-deed to the land of their inheritance. Every mountain and valley, every rock and river lifted up to heaven their voices against this new pollution, and cried to Jehovah for deliverance from it. The cry was answered by the avenging bands of the Ammonite from his sloping hill-side, of the Amorite from his mountain fortress, and of the Philistine from his sea-girt plain. As the bands of Israel dropped Jehovah's banner their strength departed from them, and they became weak before their enemies. *Wilberforce.*

“They did evil again in the sight of Jehovah;” and as cause and effect are inseparable, Jehovah delivered them into the hand of their enemies. But, as they were His chosen people, the punishment was not destructive but corrective. Now, correction betokens love. It is a proof of a father's deep interest in his child. So our heavenly Father speaks to His family: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). Israel was worse than all others, in proportion as Israel ought to have been better: “Judgment must begin at the house of God.” And as the continual repetition of their apostasy aggravated their guilt, the oppression by their Philistine enemy was suffered to last for double the time (forty years) that the longest of their past oppressions had continued. A. R. F.

3. The angel of the Lord. The uncreated angel, the Angel-Jehovah, so often spoken of in the preceding narrative, and who appeared to Moses, to Joshua, to Gideon, and others. Evidence of this will disclose itself as we proceed. *Bush.*

Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were *perpetual Nazarites*. Abstinence from strong drink, and from anything made of the grape; letting the locks of the head grow unchecked by the razor; and keeping quite clear of any pollution from a dead body, even in case of the death of his nearest relations, were the chief articles of a Nazarite's vow. **He shall begin**

to save. This is an exact description of what Samson did. He did not “deliver Israel” as the other judges did; but he began to shake the Philistine power, and prepared the way for the deliverance of Israel in the time of his worthier successor Samuel. A. C. H.—He never entirely broke their yoke, but left much of this work unfinished. No complete deliverance was effected short of the age of David. Remarkably he achieved all he did by the power of his single arm. It was done by courage and muscular force. Unlike the Judges before him, he planned no stratagem; created no panic among his foes; never set them upon mutual slaughter; never rallied the warriors of Israel's tribes to his standard, and apparently never had their help at all. H. C.

5. The language of Christ to Manoah's wife was all concerning “a deliverance,” which was to come through her. In whatever garb Christ may visit us, it is still an advent; and the purpose of that advent is to strike off a chain, to give liberty, essential, true, eternal liberty, “deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” *Vaughan.*

8. See the strength of Manoah's faith. He saw not the messenger, he heard not the errand, he examined not the circumstances; yet now he takes thought, not whether he shall have a son, but how he shall order the son which he must have; and sues to God, not for the son which as yet he had not, but for the direction of governing him when he should be. Zachariah had the same message; and craving a sign, lost that voice wherewith he craved it: Manoah seeks no sign for the promise, but counsel for himself. True faith takes all for granted, yea for performed, which is once promised. *Bp. H.*

9. And God hearkened—and the angel of God came again. The phraseology here is worthy of notice. The sacred writer does not say, “And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah, and sent his angel,” but, “God hearkened to the voice of Manoah and the angel of God came again,” implying that it was the God who hearkened to the voice of his servant that came in the person of his Son.

12. The Heb. may properly be rendered, “and now thy words shall come to pass,” intimating his implicit confidence in the promise. “Lord, I lay hold upon what thou hast said, and depend upon it with the most unwavering assurance.” *Bush.*—Every parent's prayer should be that of Manoah, “O my Lord, teach us what we shall do to the child? How shall we order him? how shall we do unto him?” How shall we so train him as to be a spiritual Nazarite and liv-

ing sacrifice unto God? Manoah prayed for direction in rearing the child, even before his birth. So prayer should precede the entrance of a believer's child into the world. Grace should forestall Satan's working, which begins from the time of actual birth. A. R. F.

16. This was the Angel of the Covenant, or the Lord Jehovah Himself. And yet, when Manoah proposes to provide a kid for Him, He tells him that if it be as an *offering* he must offer it unto the Lord. T. C.—He does not forbid him to present a burnt-offering, but he would have him assured as to the true character of the object of his worship. In saying, "If thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord," he does not deny that he was himself Jehovah, or intimate that he would decline the honor which Manoah intended, any more than our Saviour would intimate that he was not good, when, being addressed by the title "Good Master," he replied, "there is none good but God." In both cases his answer has reference to *the light in which they regarded Him*. Here he merely intended to say, that though Manoah might offer him a common meal as a man, yet it would not do to offer him a *sacrifice* without *full evidence* that he was indeed Divine. This evidence was not yet gained, for it is immediately added, "For Manoah knew not (had not a clear conviction) that he was the angel of the Lord"—i.e., the Angel Jehovah; but he was soon to be assured that he was. The whole address of the angel appears to be framed with reference to the manifestation which he was just about to make.

18. It is wonderful. Is. 9 : 6, "His name shall be called *Wonderful*." In *apparently* declining therefore to reveal his name he does in fact make known one of his most august and glorious titles, one which went far toward conveying an idea of the Divine attributes of his nature, and one which was therefore eminently appropriate to the drift of Manoah's question. By assuming a title which unquestionably belongs to the promised Messiah, he identifies himself with that Divine personage, and consequently puts it beyond a doubt who it is that is meant by the term "Angel" or "Angel of the Lord," so frequently occurring in the Old Testament Scriptures in connection with miraculous appearances and revelations. It is plain that it is no other than the Angel-Jehovah, so emphatically alluded to Ex. 23 : 20, 21.

19. Manoah took a kid—and offered it. He had by this time become so far satisfied as to the real character of his guest, that he offers the kid as a holocaust accompanied

with the usual meal-offering which the law prescribed. *Bush*.

The angel did wondrously. Wrought a great miracle, according to the name which he had just given himself; for he caused fire from heaven to consume the provisions, as an acceptable offering to God, and then ascended up himself in the flame and vanished out of sight. *Pyle*.—This was a significant sign that he was the angel of the Lord himself, who formerly had appeared to Gideon and set fire to his sacrifice upon the rock, and now vanished in the flame by a fuller manifestation of his divinity. His name, *Wonderful*, is repeated among the magnificent titles applied in prophecy to the great Deliverer of the faithful by Isaiah. And from the fear of death expressed on seeing him by Manoah, and intimated by Gideon before, it appears that he was the same God who told Moses, "There shall no man see me and live," or, the Son of God. *Hales*.—Gideon's angel vanished at his sacrifice, but this in the sacrifice; that Manoah might at once see both the confirmation of his promise and the acceptation of his obedience. Manoah believed before and craved no sign to assure him; God voluntarily confirms it to him above his desire: "To him that hath shall be given:" where there are beginnings of faith the mercy of God will add perfection. *Bp. II*.

God's acceptance of the offering intimates to what we owe the acceptance of all our offerings, even to the mediation of the Angel of the Covenant, who puts *much incense to the prayers of saints*, and so *offers them before the throne* (Rev. 8 : 3). Prayer is the ascent of the soul to God. But it is Christ in the heart by faith that makes it an offering of a sweet-smelling savor: without him our services are offensive smoke, but in him, acceptable flame. *H*.

22, 23. The weaker vessel becomes the stronger; the logic of faith forms the true inference. As Manoah here showed great fear; so his wife, great faith. The wife's trustfulness in God made her a juster reasoner than her husband. A. R. F.—The reason was good, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us he would not have received a burnt-offering from us." God will not accept gifts where he intends punishment and professes hatred. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." If we can find assurance of God's acceptation of our sacrifices, we may be sure he loves our persons. "If I incline to wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but the Lord hath heard me." *Bp. II*.

24. After Moses, the only eminent persons of

the Old Testament whom we are permitted to know from their birth, are Samson, Samuel, and Solomon. Of the three the early life of Samuel is the best known. Of that of Samson we only know—and it is much to know—that “the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.” By this, having his destination in view, we may understand that the Lord gave evident proofs that the child was under his peculiar protection; and, by the gifts he bestowed, gave sign that he was preparing him for something great and extraordinary. *Kil.*

The small results ensuing upon Samson's exploits disappoint the expectations which would naturally be entertained of one whose birth was so specially announced and ordered by God. His actions themselves, moreover, have the outward aspect of self-willed, fool-hardy, and venturesome feats of mere strength, and these in connection with discreditable alliances with heathen women. But his very failure to accomplish Israel's deliverance, through his unfaithfulness to his Nazarite vow, in contrast to his extraordinary prowess when moved by the Spirit of God, qualified him the better to be *an embodied reproof to the Israelites, whose calling was to be a nation of priests*, though through apostasy they lost their power against the enemy. *Samson was, in his own person, a lesson to teach Israel that her strength lay in separation from idols and complete consecration to Jehovah.* On the other hand, Samson, as a Nazarite, vowed to Jehovah, was to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines; and so, by his heroic strength, which was derived from faith in God and the Divine gift entrusted to him, he was fitted to instruct the slumbering nation how to awake and put on strength; he exhibited in his own person the might to which the people of God might attain, if only they would be faithful and whole-hearted toward their God. In a word, it is in *his typical aspect toward Israel* that we find the key to the character and history of Samson, the last of the judges so extraordinarily called by God, and the one in whom the power of Jehovah, exhibited so marvellously, found its culmination. *A. R. F.*

25. The Spirit of the Lord began to move him. The communication of this Spirit under the Old Testament was generally made in the form of extraordinary and supernatural influence upon the human spirit. The expression used to denote this is usually “The Spirit of the Lord (Jehovah) came upon him.” The recipients and bearers of this Spirit were thereby endowed with the power to perform miraculous deeds, ability to prophesy, also with

power to work miracles or to accomplish deeds which surpassed the courage and strength of the natural man. *Keil.*—Inspiration brought to Samson neither the grace of purity nor the gift of prophecy; but it gave him the special gifts which he needed for his special work. He would have been a nobler man if he had sought the Spirit of God also to help him in more spiritual ways. The receipt of spiritual gifts depends on the *condition of our spirit*. Samson was only rightly disposed to receive the Spirit at intervals. *W. F. A.*

The one lesson which stands out above the others and runs through the whole chapter is that of the conjugal relation of man and wife, which is set forth with inimitable simplicity and force. The holiness and happiness, the peace and union of countless homes, is due to the marriage law of the Gospel of Christ. But then this law must be kept in the spirit as well as in the letter. The conduct of Manoah's wife after her first interview with the angel is a beautiful exemplification of this spirit in the wife: “Then the woman came and told her husband.” She had no secrets for the “man of God” which were to be hidden from her husband, nor had the angel any counsel to give which her husband was not to know of. It was on the second time of his appearing as on the first: “she made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me.” It is a very forcible lesson to the effect that no pretence of spiritual authority can justify interference with the laws of nature, which are the laws of God. The function of a confessor and spiritual director is incompatible with the Christian law of marriage, as it is with the “first commandment with promise,” when it stands between children and their parents. Nor is Manoah's trust in his wife less conspicuous than her trust in him. Not a shadow of doubt as to the truth of her statement crossed his mind, not a shade of jealousy that the message came to her rather than to him. In the desire for further information his wisdom suggested prayer that the Lord would send again the man of God; but the language of his prayer was beautifully expressive of the union that was betwixt them two. “Let the man of God come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child.” And when the second time the angel appeared to the woman alone, he took it as the answer to his prayer. As she came quickly to him, so he quickly followed her. With manly courage he asked the questions which her feminine modesty had not dared to put, and appeared at once

in his proper place, ordering and directing what was to be done with regard to the rites of hospitality and piety ; and yet when his own fears were excited by having seen the angel of God, he sought counsel from his wife, and readily acquiesced in her pious trust in the mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord. And exactly the same perfect union between them appears many years afterward, when Samson was grown up (ch. 14 : 2-5), so that the whole passage is a beautiful idyl of conjugal love and concord. They both fulfil their proper parts with the utmost simplicity and propriety ; they both contribute to the common stock of wedded happiness what each had to contribute ; neither of them had one word of reproach or bitterness to the other ; neither of them attempted to usurp the other's place, or shrunk from occupying their own. And they have left for our study and imitation as beautiful an example of the mutual help and harmony of married life as is to be found in the whole range of Scripture. A. C. H.

14 : 1. Zorah, the town of Samson's birth, was perched on one of the chief summits of this region, overlooking the plain. Only three miles to the southwest was Timnath, where he found his Philistine wife. Only some eight or ten miles in the same general direction, was, as seems most probable, the city of Gath ; and no doubt his lawless sports at Timnath were speedily the talk in this princely city. The terror of his name, indeed, seems soon to have secured him the freedom of the country ; for we find him once at Askelon, on the sea-coast, far from home, and then still farther south, at the royal city of Gaza. N. C. B.—Standing at Zorah, and looking across the valley further westward to the opposite crest, we can see the ruin of Tibnah, the ancient *Timnath*. It is not in the plain, but 740 feet above the sea ; and Samson, in going to it from Zorah, would have to descend 700 feet into the valley and then reascend 350 feet. Vineyards and olives still line the sides of the hill (verse 5), and corn waves in the valley as when Samson turned the jackals loose with the firebrands, and the Philistines *came up* to Timnath and burned Samson's wife and her father with fire. Timnath was an important place in later Jewish history, and the fourth of the military cities at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is now desolate. *Tristram*.

3. I wish Manoah could speak so loud that all our Israelites might hear him : “ Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all God's people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines ? ”

If religion be any other than a cypher, how dare we not regard it in our most important choice ? Is she a fair Philistine ? Why is not this deformity of the soul more powerful to dissuade us than the beauty of the face or of metal to allure us ? *Bp. II.*

4. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord that he [Samson] sought an occasion against the Philistines. Samson, in the old fleshy nature, was seeking his own self-gratification : but the higher impulses in him from the Spirit of God, in concert with the Providence of God, were seeking an opportunity of quarrelling with, and so delivering Israel from the Philistines. Whatever may have been Samson's carnal purpose, *in effect* he sought an occasion against the oppressors. A. R. F.

The special design of God in raising up Samson as a deliverer seems to have been to *baffle the power of the whole Philistine nation by the prowess of a single individual*. In order that the contest might be carried on in this way, it was necessary that the entire opposition of the Philistines should be *concentrated, as far as possible, against the person of Samson*, so as to illustrate most signally the power of God in the overthrow of his enemies. But how could this result be brought about except by means of some *private quarrel* between Samson and the enemy with which he was to contend ? **For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.** Added in order to intimate the *general moving cause* which prompted Samson to exert himself in behalf of his people. They were suffering under the despotic and tyrannical sway of their oppressors. It was in this fact that a justification was to be sought for the commencement of hostilities. *Bush*.

8. Samson in slaying the lion, and the bees in swarming in its carcase, did things which were links in the chain of events which God foresaw, or fore-ordained, as he did also the effects of Samson's marriage with the Philistine. But just as the bees only followed their instinct in building their hive, so Samson, in fixing his affections on the Timnathite, and in attacking the lion, and in eating the honey, and in propounding the riddle, and in avenging himself for his wife's treachery, was merely following the bent of his own inclinations and the leading of his own will, though in so doing he was bringing about God's purpose for the deliverance of Israel. The most trivial events may be necessary links in the great chain ; and while men are blindly following their own inclinations, with little thought and no knowledge of what

will come of them, God is making use of them with unerring wisdom to work out his own eternal purposes for the good of his people and for the glory of his own great name. A. C. H.

12. The circumstances of the wedding-feast in Timnath are in keeping with such occasions at the present day. Even the weddings of ordinary people are celebrated with great rejoicings, which are kept up several days. The games and sports, also, by which the companions of the bridegroom pass away the time, are not unlike those mentioned in the fourteenth chapter of Judges, and such occasions frequently end in quarrels, and even bloodshed. *Thompson.*

17. Whom the lion could not conquer, the tears of a woman have conquered. Adam the perfectest man, Samson the strongest man, Solomon the wisest man, were betrayed with the flattery of their helpers. As there is no comfort comparable to a faithful yoke-fellow, so woe be to him who is matched with a Philistine. *Bp. H.*

Samson had been brought up in the faith of the Lord God of Israel. He was in covenant with him by circumcision. His religious duty was to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and to serve him alone. His wife did not believe in the Lord, but was a worshipper of Dagon. There could therefore be no union for them in that great bond of union which is the living God. They had nothing in common to cement their hearts and interests together, and to bind their life into one. He was pleased with her beauty, and she was gratified by his admiration. That was all. And how long would that last? What strong temptation, what powerful motive of action, what great provocation, would those influences be able to withstand? What promise did they give of unity of sentiment and harmony of conduct amid the intricacies of conflicting duties? One week in their case was sufficient to supply the answer to these questions. A betrayed husband, a deserted wife, discord,

strife, bloodshed, were the fruit of seven days of this ill-assorted union. The wife married to another husband is cut off by murderous hands in the prime of her youth and beauty. The husband married to another wife is again betrayed and given up to his enemies to be mocked, and blinded, and to die. We seem, therefore, to be taught by the ill-starred marriage of Samson with the Timnathite, as forcibly as by the blessed union of his father and mother, what to seek and what to avoid in choosing a partner for life. The union of two souls in the love of God and in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ; the union of two minds in all rational and sober pursuits, whether intellectual, political, or social; the identity of interests; the community of purpose to make the most of what God has given to each for the common stock of happiness; the care of each for the other as the first human duty, and the faithfulness of each to the other in the whole series of actions, from the least to the greatest—this is the ideal of Christian wedlock to which we are led by the failures of the one as well as by the virtues of the other. A. C. H.

15 : 6. Burnt her and her father with fire. A most inhuman and barbarous act on the part of its perpetrators, yet wonderfully overruled in the Providence of God to chastise the guilty. The Philistines had threatened Samson's wife that if she did not obtain and disclose her husband's secret, they would burn her and her father's house with fire. She, to save herself and oblige her countrymen, betrayed her husband; and now by so doing brought upon herself the very doom which she so studiously sought to avoid! *Bush.*—How many, to shun pain and danger, have yielded to evil, and in the long run have been met in the teeth with that mischief which they had hoped to have left behind them! How many, in a desire to eschew the shame of men, have fallen into the confusion of God! Both good and evil are sure paymasters at the last. *Bp. H.*

Section 231.

SAMSON SLAYS A THOUSAND PHILISTINES AT LEHI. HIS ESCAPE FROM GAZA. SAMSON WITH DELILAH. CAPTURE AND IMPRISONMENT ; REPENTANCE AND FINAL VICTORY. DEATH, BURIAL, AND CHARACTER.

JUDGES 15 : 9-20 ; 16 : 1-31.

THE minds of many intelligent readers of the Bible are more or less confused over the Israelitish history, as broken in upon and mixed up with Philistine interventions and wars. A little systematic attention to the history, in connection with the geography, would not only remove this confusion, but at the same time throw a new charm around some of the most romantic and some of the most pathetic passages of the Old Testament. The Philistine territory is the southern portion of the great maritime plain of Palestine—the portion extending from the desert on the south northward to the neighborhood of Jaffa. Lying thus on the sea, and moreover affording the great highway of communication between Asia and Africa, it was the part of the Holy Land first and best known to the Greeks, who therefore gave the name *Palestina*, or land of the Philistines, to the whole country of which it was a part. In thinking of Philistia, we may picture vast expanses of grain-fields stretching from the sand-downs of the coast back to the mountain-barrier of Judea. “The vineyards and the olives,” of which we read, may have been interspersed amid the grain-fields over the whole extent of the country ; yet the eastern border of the country, broken by spurs of the Judean hills and abounding in ravines and hill-slopes, would naturally be preferred for these. And so, when Samson, in the time of wheat-harvest, came down from his home in the rocky fastnesses of Dan among the neighboring Philistines, and incensed against them, caught three hundred jackals and let them loose with lighted fire-brands attached to them, it is precisely natural that these, betaking themselves to the hills, should kindle a conflagration destructive not only of the standing corn and the shocks of the harvest, but also, as we read, of “the vineyards and the olives.” There were five principal cities of the Philistines : Gaza on the south, Ekron on the north, and Askelon, Ashdod, and Gath, between. Of these, Askelon alone was actually on the sea-coast. The rest, except Gath, were near the coast. The Philistines appear to have been a thick-headed, plodding sort of people. Evidently David presumed

on their dulness when pursued by Saul he fled to Gath—the very city of Goliath, their champion whom he had slain, and deceived them by a very shallow device. Samson, too, with grim and grotesque humor, made perpetual game of them. Yet, dull of intellect as they may have been, they were not destitute of a spirit of enterprise and of a purpose wonderfully steady and obstinate. N. C. B.

11-13. The fact that the people of Judah, in whose tribe Samson afterward found a retreat in a cleft or cavern of some unknown rock then called Etam, actually delivered him up bound at the demand of the Philistines ; and the anxiety they feel and express lest these proud heathen should take offence at their harboring their own great champion, shows how completely the nation had lost heart. *Kit.*—Their spirits were broken by the base bondage which their iniquities had brought upon them, and instead of bravely setting Samson at their head to fight for their liberty, they meanly resolve to make a sacrifice of him to his enemies ! Instead of honoring him for his courage, they blame him for his rashness, and desire him peaceably to submit to their bonds ! **Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.** Though he had abundant occasion to expostulate with them on account of their ingratitude and to upbraid them with their cowardice, yet he generously forbears reproaches, and merely demands assurance that he should receive no harm at their hands. He does not make this stipulation for fear of them, for he could as easily have freed himself from the hands of his brethren as from those of the Philistines, but he would avoid the *necessity* of acting toward them as enemies. *Bush.*

Contrast with those men of Judah the feelings and the conduct of Samson. Conscious of Divine aid and of having unfailing strength in God, his courage never drooped in the darkest days of the Philistine oppression. Conscious of his own high calling and of the election of Israel to be the people of God, he could not brook the notion of being ruled over by the uncircumcised, nor did he lose the hope of some

great deliverance. And even the feeling that he stood alone did not quench his spirit. He did not lose sight of hope, because he did not lose sight of God. A. C. H.

15. A most vivid and stirring description! The Spirit of the Lord with that suddenness which marks his extraordinary movements, came upon Samson and mightily strengthened him in his outer man. The strong new cords snapped asunder in an instant, and before the Philistines could recover from their terror at seeing their great enemy free, he had snatched up the heavy jawbone of an ass recently dead, and with it smote the flying Philistines till a thousand of them had fallen under his blows. A. C. H.

18. Then in the moment of his triumph came to him to teach him his weakness without his God the sore thirst under which his mighty strength fainted. He cried unto the Lord in a prayer which witnesses in its every word to his deep sense of his being in these acts no mere pursuer of personal vengeance, but in very deed an instrument in the hand of Jehovah for the rescuing of his people. "Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" He did not cry in vain, for in the rock at Lehi He who bringeth water out of the great deeps opened its fresh springs, and when the thirst-found hero had drunk his spirit came again and he revived. *Wilberforce.*

19. The statement is quite clear that *God clave the hollow place which is in Lehi*, and that a spring of water came out, to which Samson gave the name *En-halkcoreh*, the spring of him that called upon God, which name continued till the time of the writer. A. C. H.

20. Great at this time was the glory of Manoa's son. Terrified by the utter failure of their last attempt, the Philistines withdrew themselves into their own borders. Samson judged his people, and though the heathen yoke yet dishonored Judah, it was little more than an empty token of subjection, while Samson was at hand to avenge upon their trembling hosts any act of aggression or of wrong. For twenty years it seems that this long pause lasted; and then the last and greatest of the judges falls before the temptations of the flesh, and ends in shame and ruin, his life of bright but fitful splendor. It is a dark and miserable history, to be told in a few mournful words, to be stored up by all for closest self-application in their heart of hearts. The mighty man "who had burst the fetters of his foes could not break

the cords of his own lusts" (*Ambrose*). *Wilberforce.*

16 : 1. And Samson went to Gaza.

It may have been many years after his victory at Lehi, toward the latter part of his twenty years' judgeship. Gaza, now *Ghuzzeh*, one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, once a strong place, but now a large open town. It was the last town in Southwest Palestine on the road from Jerusalem to Egypt. It played an important part in history in all ages. A. C. H.

In Samson we note a strange blending of courage and physical strength with a weakness toward women. Was it partly for the sake of the moral lessons enforced by such an example that these painful facts were permitted to occur and the record of them to appear in the sacred history? We read it with a painfully quickened sense of the weakness of some of the strongest men. Moreover, it does undoubtedly throw light upon the dangers continually incident to the close social contact of Israel with the Canaanites remaining in the land. Those families of ancient Canaan had art, culture, beauty; and when these qualities were found by the men and women of Israel, associated with an attractive sensuous idol-worship, we can readily see how subtle and perilous the temptation became. H. C.

Is it a puzzling fact that Gideon, and Jephthah, and Samson should not be more free from the passions and temptations incident to human beings, incident to men of their tribe and race and of their peculiar age, incident to special gifts and position, than all those whom we have heard of before? The conscience of mankind has answered this question. It has said very decidedly, "This would not have been a true book and therefore certainly not a Divine book, if it had been otherwise. Above all, it would not have been a book for men. We should have had no sympathy with it; it would have given us no warnings. It might have been useful for the people of another planet; it would have proved itself not to be intended for ours." *Maurice.*

The history of Samson here closely follows that of Israel. As Israel claimed for self, and would have used for self the gifts and calling of God; as it would have boasted in its Nazarite-strength and trusted in it, irrespective of its real meaning and the object of its bestowal, so now Samson. He goes down to Gaza, one of the fortified strongholds of the Philistines, *not* impelled by the Spirit of Jehovah, but for self-indulgence, confident and boastful in what he regards as his own strength. Nor does that

strength yet fail him, at least outwardly. For God is faithful to His promise, and so long as Samson has not cast away His help, it shall not fail him. But already he is on the road to it, and the night at Gaza must speedily be followed by the story of Delilah. A. E.

3. Took the doors of the gate.

Not the great gate itself, but the two smaller doors or leaves, constructed within the large gate, and which alone were opened on ordinary occasions. The posts, bar, etc., of these were different from the more solid and massy fixtures of the great gate. It was indeed an instance of Divine forbearance at which Samson had occasion to wonder that his supernatural strength was yet continued to him, notwithstanding his aggravated offence. *Bush.*

Samson and Delilah.

16 : 4-20.

5. Entice him. The princes of the Philistines knew already where Samson's *weakness* lay, though not his *strength*, and therefore they would entice his harlot with gifts to entice him.

15. As a hoodwinked man sees some glimmering of light but not enough to guide him, so was the case with Samson, who had reason enough left to make trial of Delilah by a crafty misinformation, but not enough upon that trial to distrust and hate her : he had not resolution enough to deceive her thrice, nor wit enough to keep himself from being deceived by her. Thrice had he seen the Philistines in his chamber ready to surprise him, yet will he needs continue a slave to his traitor. Warning not taken is a certain presage of destruction. *Bp. H.*

16. His soul was vexed unto death.

He was so racked by two contrary passions struggling within him, love of Delilah and regard for his own life and strength, that he became weary of life and careless what became of him : God now forsook him because he abandoned himself to sensual pleasure ; and his love of the harlot prevailed over his care of himself. *Bp. Patrick.*

17. Told her all his heart. Alas ! how are the mighty fallen ! Well could Samson now adopt the language of Solomon ;—" I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands are bands : whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her ; but the sinner shall be taken by her." *Bush.*—We wonder that a man could possibly be so sottish, and yet we ourselves by temptation become no less insensate : sinful pleasures, like a common Delilah, lodge in our bosoms ; we know they aim at nothing but the death of our soul ; we

will yield to them and die. Every willing sinner is a Samson : let us not inveigh against his senselessness, but our own. Nothing is so gross and unreasonable to a well-disposed mind, which temptation will not represent fit and plausible. No soul can out of his own strength secure himself from that sin which he most detesteth. *Bp. H.*

18. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me. Not that his strength lay in his hair, for this in fact had no natural influence upon it. His strength arose from his peculiar *relation* to God as a Nazarite, and the preservation of his hair unshaven or unshorn was the *mark* or *sign* of his Nazariteship, and a *pledge* on the part of God of the continuance of his miraculous physical powers. If he lost this sign, the badge of his consecration, he broke his vow and consequently forfeited the thing signified. God abandoned him, and he was thenceforward no more in this respect than a common man ; he was deprived of supernatural strength. *Bush.*—As one writes : " The superhuman strength of Samson lay not in his uncut hair, but in this, that Jehovah was with him. But Jehovah was with him only so long as he kept his Nazarite vow." Or, in the words of an old German commentary : " God allows his strength to be destroyed, that in bitter experience he might learn, how without God's presence he was nothing at all. And so our falls always teach us best." A. E.

19. Contrast the scene in which the angel stands before his awed but happy parents, making the promise of his birth and of God's deliverance by him, with that in which the son of such a promise lay with his Nazarite head in the lap of that Philistine woman, and suffered his unholy passion to make betrayal of Jehovah's trust ! No wonder that when his locks were left upon her knees " the Lord was departed from him." No wonder the Philistines were suffered to take him and put out his eyes. The infatuated man had consented to all that. He knew that he was dealing with a traitress, yet, step by step, he went straight on till the fatal end was reached. And at every step he was himself traitor to his Divine commission. *Ganse.*

20. Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him. It is a sad but sure sign that a soul is becoming thoroughly carnal when the man is unconscious of the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, and flatters himself, amid his lusts, that his spiritual strength is the same still as when he was consecrated to God. A secure state is often also associated with a vaunting and fluent tongue : " I will go

out, as at other times before, and shake myself." But when Jehovah has departed from any one, Ichabod is written upon him, the glory is departed, and he is utterly powerless against every foe. A. R. F.

21. The Philistines took him when God was departed from him; those that have thrown themselves out of God's protection become an easy prey to their enemies. If we sleep in the lap of our lusts, we shall certainly wake in the hands of the Philistines. His eyes were the inlets of his sin, and now his punishment began there. Now that the Philistines had blinded him, he had time to remember how his own lust had blinded him. The best preservative of the eyes is to turn them away from beholding vanity. They brought him down to Gaza, that there he might appear in weakness where he had lately given such proofs of his strength, and be a jest to those to whom he had been a terror. They bound him with fetters of brass. Poor Samson, how art thou fallen! How are the glory and defence of Israel become the drudge and triumph of the Philistines! Let all take warning by his fall, carefully to preserve their purity, and to watch against all fleshly lusts; for all our glory is gone and our defence departed from us, when the covenant of our separation to God, as spiritual Nazarites, is profaned. H.

22. The sacred text expressly has it: "And the hair of his head began to grow, as it was shorn"—that is, *so soon* as it had been shorn. Then began a period of godly sorrow and repentance, evidenced both by the return of God to him, and by his last deed of faith, in which for his people he sacrificed his life. A. E.—The loss of his hair had deprived him of strength, only because it took him out of that condition of Nazariteship with which his strength was inseparably connected; so that from the return of his strength with the growth of his hair, we can only understand that he repented and renewed voluntarily the vows of devotion which had been imposed upon him before his birth, and which he had so miserably broken. Kit.—The God of mercy looked upon the blindness of Samson, and in these fetters enlarged his heart from the worse prison of his sin. His hair grew together with his repentance, and his strength with his hair. God's merciful humiliations of his own are sometimes so severe that they seem to differ little from desertions; yet at the worst, he loves us bleeding; and when we have smarted enough, we shall feel his love. Bp. H.—The world outwits itself when it presses hard on God's deserters, and thus drives them to repent. God mercifully takes care that

his wandering children shall not have an easy time of it; and his chastisements, at their sharpest, are calls to us to come back to him. A. M.

Doubtless in that prison the work of God which he had so often counteracted was wrought indeed with him. Doubtless in those lonely hours of darkness, with no familiar voice to cheer their blackness, with no sound of kindness to mingle with their gloom, conscience would arouse itself in all its power; doubtless he who needed so severe a discipline of love for his perfecting, had grace given him to yield himself to all its cleansing and purifying power; for his name, by the hand of God the Holy Ghost, has been engraven in the golden catalogue of the faithful; doubtless he, beyond all others, now that his earthly strength had departed from him, was, in the higher sense of the great words, "out of weakness made strong." The days, the weeks, the months, passed on, and down in the dark hold of the heathen dungeon, in his blindness angels visited the lonely man, nay, the God who had made his Nazarite strength so strong was with him in the prison. Wilberforce.

24. They said, "Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy and the destroyer of our country." These cries must have struck upon Samson's heart. He now saw with deep intensity of shame and sorrow how the name of the Lord had been dishonored through his misconduct, seeing that they ascribed to their own god that triumph over the covenanted servant of Jehovah, which they owed only to his own folly and sin. He knew that in the view of the Philistines the triumph over him was equivalent to a triumph of their god over the God whose servant he professed himself to be, whose protection he claimed, and whose people he in some sort represented. Yet out of this despair he gathered hope. He was aware that Jehovah was a jealous God, and that He knew well how to vindicate the honor of his own great name. The question was now put upon a different ground. It was no longer a matter between Samson and the Philistines, but between Dagon and Jehovah; and he might venture to think that, fallen as he was, he might yet hope for the Divine assistance in any effort which occasion might present to strike one great blow in discharge of his mission as the destroyer, seeing that thereby he would vindicate the superiority of the Lord over the miserable idol which the Philistines worshipped as their god. The opportunity he desired was offered and in such a shape as to confirm his purpose, by his being compelled to be present at their odious triumph and by being him-

self the object of their keen taunts and bitter scorn. *Kil.*

28. It is not a private wrong, merely, that he would avenge ; he would vindicate the liberties of his people and the honor of his God. *O Lord Jehovah, . . . O God :* This accumulation of Divine titles indicates the earnestness of his petition, while they severally represent different aspects of the Divine Being on whom he reposes his confidence. This confession of his faith he utters in loud tones, in the audience of these idolaters, making his last appeal to God, who had strengthened him in former times, that he would now strengthen him. *W. H. G.*—He prayed to God to remember him and strengthen him this once, thereby owning that his strength for what he had already done he had from God, and begged it might be afforded to him once more to give them a parting blow. That it was not from a principle of passion or personal revenge but from a holy zeal for the glory of God and Israel that he desired to do this, appears from God's accepting and answering the prayer. *H.*—There is the true core of religion in the prayer. It is penitence which pleads, "Remember me, O Lord God !" He knows that his sin has broken the flow of loving Divine thought to him, but he asks that the broken current may be renewed. Many a silent tear had fallen from the blind eyes before that prayer could have come to his lips, as he leaned on the great pillars. Clear recognition of the Source of his strength is in the prayer ; he had recovered his conscious dependence amid the misery of the prison. *A. M.*

He sues to that God who was a party in this indignity for power to revenge His wrongs more than his own. It is zeal that moves him and not malice ; his renewed faith tells him that he was destined to plague the Philistines ; and reason tells him that his blindness puts him out of the hope of such another opportunity : knowing, therefore, that this play of the Philistines must end in his death, he collects all the forces of his soul and body, that his death may be a punishment instead of a disport ; and that his soul may be more victorious in the parting than in the animation : and so addresses himself both to die and kill. *Bp. H.*—His privation of eyesight, had he lived, would have been the perpetual memorial of his unfaithfulness to God, and of the foe's spiritual and bodily triumph over him. The avenging of his eyes was therefore inseparably connected with the avenging of God's cause and the deliverance of Israel ; for he was the elect nation's representative both in his faithfulness and his backsliding. *A. R. F.*

29, 30. Amid all that thronging, garrulous crowd he is alone with his God. Blindness, sorrow, captivity, and loneliness have done their work upon the solitary man. All his great soul is turned inward. He scarcely hears or sees anything around him. His thoughts are with the past : with the days of his Nazarite youth ; with his early associations ; with his witness for his God ; with his wanderings from Him. What is there yet that he can do, what is there that he can suffer, for his Lord ? There is but one last offering he can make ; it is the offering of himself : he is again in outward form a dedicated Nazarite. Has the God in whom he has now learned was all his early strength—has He come to him again ? Will Jehovah accept even from one stained as he has been the offering of his all ? He puts forth out of his deep heart the cry for one more gift of strength whereby the enemies of Israel may be humbled, wherewith Jehovah may yet triumph over Dagon. He prays his last prayer ; offers to his God his life ; grasps with those arms of iron the massive central columns which support the wide-spanned roof, and bows himself with all his might. There is a shaking of the pillars ; a cry of terror upon this side and on that—a wild rush beginning, and on it all settles down, with one loud crash, mingling like the deep thunder with the cries of the dying, the vast proportions of the crumbling building. At last Jehovah has triumphed. Dagon has fallen before the God of Israel. The Hebrew judge has indeed wrought the destruction of the Philistines ; the eyeless captive has done more than Samson in his might. "The dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." *Wilberforce.*

Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it. The penitent heroism of the end makes us lenient to its flaws ; and we leave the last of the judges to sleep in his grave, recognizing in him, with all his faults and grossness, a true soldier of God, though in strange garb. *A. M.*

31. Samson's brethren and his father's house come down. From the ruins they search out the mangled body of the Nazarite. No one cares to interfere with them. Unmolested they bear away the remains, and lay them to rest in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And so ends the period of the judges—not in battles of tribes, but with the mighty solitary achievements of one individual, who is to teach what a Nazarite is, and what a Nazarite can do. We feel that Samson could have no successor among the judges. He is followed by another Nazarite, Samuel, who ushers in a new period, when re-

pentant Israel will, in the strength of the Lord, fight and conquer the Philistines. A. E.

Nothing is more noteworthy in this history than the illustration it affords of the difference between physical and moral courage. Samson had physical courage ; it was the natural accompaniment of his extraordinary strength. But he lacked the moral strength which lies not in nerve, nor in brain, but in a humble yet vivid sense of the presence of God. H. P. L.—Unrivalled bodily strength co-exists with abject moral weakness. What we call the strength of passion is really its weakness. It is not passion but the repression of passion which is really strong. And the strongest character is that in which what are called the strongest passions are held in leash by the sternest will. Being such as he was, Samson naturally fell lower and lower. He falls first, in choosing a Philistine wife ; then, from wife to harlot, and from harlot to traitress. Then he is beguiled of secret, vow, strength, will, eyesight. Then, in darkness, in the deeps, he feels some mysterious stir of returning strength. Thus nerved for one supreme effort, his ten giant deeds are crowned by the eleventh, of a tremendous self-immolation. Bp. W. Alexander.

Samson's strength lay in being a Nazarite ; his weakness in yielding to his carnal lusts, and thereby becoming unfaithful to his calling. In both respects he was not only a type of Israel, but a mirror in which Israel could see itself and its history. Israel, the Nazarite people—no achievement, however marvellous, that it could not and did not accomplish ! Israel, unfaithful to its vows and yielding to spiritual adultery—no depth of degradation so low, that it would not descend to it ! The history of Israel was the history of Samson ; his victories were like theirs, till, like him, yielding to the seductions of a Delilah, Israel betrayed and lost its Nazarite strength. And so also with Samson's and with Israel's final repentance and recovery of strength. Viewed in this light, we can not only understand this history, but even its seeming difficulties become so many points of fresh meaning. We can see why his life should have been chronicled with a circumstantiality seemingly out of proportion to the deliverance he wrought ; and why there was so little and so transient result of his deeds. When the Spirit of God comes upon him, he does supernatural

deeds ; not in his own strength, but as a Nazarite, in the strength of God, by whom and for whom he had been set apart before his birth. All this showed the meaning and power of the Nazarite ; what deliverance God could work for His people even by a single Nazarite, so that one man could chase a thousand ! Thus also we understand the peculiar and almost spasmodic character of Samson's deeds, as also the reason why he always appears on the scene, not at the head of the tribes, but alone to battle. A. E.

We may see how those who for the highest purposes have been endowed with the highest gifts, on whose intellectual powers the mighty spirit of God's strength has rested, that they may work some deliverance for his people, may idly throw away, first, their noble trust, and then, at last, themselves. The employment of their high gifts at the mere bidding of the selfish will, for sport, for gain, for the gratification of a vain daring, for the pleasure of unbridled speculation, is the fulfilment in a higher sphere of the casting away of the sensual, wayward judge of the tribe of Dan. Wilberforce.

That the system of Divine administration under the judges was as effectual in securing their obedience to the Divine law as from their situation and character we could reasonably expect, may appear when we recollect that, of four hundred and fifty years which elapsed from the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan to the first election of a king in the person of Saul, above three hundred and fifty seem to have passed with no material apostasy from the national religion, and no material interruption of the public tranquillity and prosperity by the punishments which always attended such apostasy. It is peculiarly necessary to notice this circumstance, because by a superficial reader of the history the whole period under the judges may be easily mistaken as one uninterrupted series of idolatries and crimes ; from his not observing that the lapses which incurred punishment, and the Divine deliverances which attended repentance, are related so fully and distinctly as to occupy almost the entire narrative ; while very long periods, when under the government of their judges the people followed God and the land enjoyed peace, are passed over in a single verse, as productive of no occurrence which required a particular detail. Graves.

Section 232.

BIRTH OF SAMUEL. SONG OF HANNAH.

1 SAMUEL 1 : 1-28 ; 2 : 1-11.

1 1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of
2 Zuph, an Ephraimite : and he had two wives ; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name
3 of the other Peninnah : and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And this
man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of
hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests unto the LORD, were
4 there. And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to
5 all her sons and her daughters, portions : but unto Hannah he gave a double portion : for he
6 loved Hannah, but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her rival provoked her sore, for to
7 make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when
she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her ; therefore she wept, and did not
8 eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou ? and why eatest
9 thou not ? and why is thy heart grieved ? am not I better to thee than ten sons ? So Hannah
10 rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon
his seat by the door post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and
11 prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if
thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget
thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the
12 LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to
13 pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah,
she spake in her heart ; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard : therefore Eli
14 thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken ? put
15 away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a
sorrowful spirit : I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before
16 the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial : for out of the abundance of
17 my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go
18 in peace : and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she
said, Let thy servant find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and
19 her countenance was no more sad. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped
before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah : and Elkanah knew Hannah
20 his wife ; and the LORD remembered her. And it came to pass, when the time was come
about, that Hannah conceived, and bare a son ; and she called his name Samuel, saying, Be-
21 cause I have asked him of the LORD. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to
22 offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up ; for she said
unto her husband, *I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that*
23 *he may appear before the LORD, and there abide forever.* And Elkanah her husband said
unto her, Do what seemeth thee good ; tarry until thou have weaned him ; only the LORD
24 establish his word. So the woman tarried and gave her son suck, until she weaned him. And
when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of
meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh : and the
25, 26 child was young. And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said,
Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto
27 the LORD. For this child I prayed ; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked
28 of him : therefore I also have granted him to the LORD ; as long as he liveth he is granted to
the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

2 1 And Hannah prayed, and said :
My heart exulteth in the LORD,
Mine horn is exalted in the LORD :

My mouth is enlarged over mine ene-
mies ;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

- 2 There is none holy as the LORD ;
For there is none beside thee :
Neither is there any rock like our God.
- 3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly ;
Let not arrogancy come out of your
mouth :
For the LORD is a God of knowledge,
And by him actions are weighed.
- 4 The bows of the mighty men are broken,
And they that stumbled are girded with
strength.
- 5 They that were full have hired out them-
selves for bread ;
And they that were hungry have ceased :
Yea, the barren hath borne seven ;
And she that hath many children lan-
guisheth.
- 6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive :
He bringeth down to the grave, and
bringeth up.
- 7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich :
He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.
- 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
He lifteth up the needy from the dung-
hill,
To make them sit with princes,
And inherit the throne of glory :
For the pillars of the earth are the
LORD'S,
And he hath set the world upon them.
- 9 He will keep the feet of his holy ones,
But the wicked shall be put to silence in
darkness ;
For by strength shall no man prevail.
- 10 They that strive with the LORD shall be
broken to pieces ;
Against them shall he thunder in heaven :
The LORD shall judge the ends of the
earth ;
And he shall give strength unto his king,
And exalt the horn of his anointed.
- 11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house.
And the child did minister unto the LORD
before Eli the priest.

The First Book of Samuel, after a gap of uncertain length, takes up the thread of Jewish history where it was dropped in the Book of Judges, at the close of the history of Samson. The Philistines are still formidable enemies of Israel, strong enough to put their armies to the rout and inflict crushing loss upon them. E. V. —For Introduction, see p. 28. B.

1 : 1-8. We have here an account of the state of the family into which Samuel the prophet was born. His father's name was Elkanah, a Levite, and of the family of the Kohathites, the most honorable house of that tribe. His ancestor Zuph was an Ephrathite—that is, of Bethlehem-judah which was called *Ephrathah* (Ruth 1 : 2). There this family of the Levites was first seated, but one branch of it in process of time removed to Mount Ephraim, from which Elkanah descended. H.

3. The Lord of Hosts. The title *Jehovah Tsebaoth* translated "Lord of hosts" meets us here for the first time in the Old Testament. In the various forms "Lord of hosts," "Lord God of hosts," "God of hosts," it is found in the Books of Samuel (and the parallel passages in 1 Chron.), Kings, the first three books of Psalms, very frequently in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets. Whatever its origin, it should be noted that the title first appears simultaneously with the foundation of the Monarchy. It is used by David in Ps. 24 : 10, as the loftiest title of Jehovah. May we not then take "hosts" in its widest sense, including both earthly and heavenly hosts, and see in the title

a proclamation of the universal sovereignty of Jehovah, needed within the nation, lest that invisible sovereignty should be forgotten in the visible majesty of the king ; and outside the nation, lest Jehovah should be supposed to be merely a national deity ? In this larger sense it includes the idea that the sovereign power was specially exercised on behalf of the covenant people, and that "the Lord of hosts" was "the God of the armies of Israel" (1 S. 17 : 45). The true pronunciation is almost certainly lost. Jehovah is a combination of the consonants of the Name with the vowels of *Adônai* which are now written with it in the Hebrew text. Modern grammarians argue that it ought to be read *Yahveh* or *Yahaveh* ; but Jehovah seems firmly rooted in the English language, and the really important point is not the exact pronunciation, but to bear in mind that it is a Proper Name, not merely an appellative title like Lord. A. F. K.

4, 5. Elkanah's marrying two wives was a transgression of the original institution of marriage, to which our Saviour reduces it (Matt. 19 : 5, 8). *From the beginning it was not so.* It made mischief in Abraham's family, and Jacob's, and here in Elkanah's : how much better does the law of God provide for our comfort and ease in this world than we should, if we were left to ourselves ! H. —The law does indeed tolerate polygamy but does not sanction it, and provides against the wrongs that easily spring from it. In general, monogamy remained predominant among the people of Israel ; in fact, the descrip-



SEILUN, THE SITE OF SHILOH.

tion of a wife in Prov. 12 : 4 ; 19 : 14 ; 31 : 10, and in particular the prophetic representation of the covenant between Jehovah and His people as marriage, clearly presuppose that monogamy is the rule. O.

9. They are at Shiloh, at the door of the tabernacle, where God had promised to meet his people, and which was the *house of prayer*. They had offered their peace-offerings, to obtain the favor of God and all good, and in token of their communion with him ; and taking the comfort of their being accepted of him they had feasted upon the sacrifice, and now it was proper to put up her prayer in virtue of that sacrifice. II.

10, 11. Whatsoever the complaint be, here is the remedy. There is one universal receipt for all evils, prayer ; when all helps fail us, this remains ; and while we have a heart, comforts it. Here was not more bitterness in the soul of Hannah than fervency : she did not only weep and pray, but vow unto God. If God will give her a son, she will give her son to God back again. The way to obtain any benefit is, to devote it in our hearts to the glory of that God of whom we ask it : by this means shall God both pleasure his servant and honor himself : whereas if the scope of our desires be carnal, we may be sure either to fail of our suit or of a blessing. *Bp. II.*

These griefs of Hannah's heart are brought before us to show why she cast her burden so earnestly upon the Lord, and how it came to pass that Samuel was a child of many and mighty prayers before he was born. Her record as a praying mother is priceless for our common humanity. It cannot be said too emphatically that hers was the true idea of woman's mission. The names of only a few women stand embalmed for all time on the pages of God's ancient word. Almost without exception, those few names are there, exalted to that high honor, because they were true mothers. II. C.

13. The heart may pray when there are no audible words, as in the case of Hannah, and such prayer shall find access to the Throne of Grace ! and there may be many words without anything of the spirit of prayer accompanying them. Whosoever is made sensible of his own weakness and of Christ's all-sufficiency, as well as of the continual blessings which he has received, is receiving and hopes to receive from above, can never be long without a silent mental ejaculation at least ; and such will find its way to the Throne of Grace, be the posture of the body what it may. Every real Christian knows well what it is to lift up his heart to God while he is walking, travelling, working, lying on his

bed, and even when he is in company ; and often is he holding an intercourse with Heaven, while those about him are busied only with the world. *III.*

14. Good men and kind are often unmerciful in their thoughts. Eli was unmerciful, when because he saw Hannah's lips passionately moving as she prayed in bitterness of soul, he counted that she had been drunken, and rebuked her as a daughter of Belial. We, too, are unmerciful in our thoughts as often as we give the worst interpretation to the words and actions of others. How many of these words and actions are capable of being taken by two handles, are patient of two interpretations—a good interpretation and a bad ! We are unmerciful when without necessity we are judges of evil thoughts, when we suspect meanness, littleness, untruthfulness, not to speak of worse surmisings, in others. The merciful in thought give no room in their hearts for suspicions such as these. They take everything by the fairest handle which it offers. *Trench.*

17. Now Eli sees his error, and recants it ; and, to make amends for his rash censure, prays for her. Even the best may err, but not persist in it : when good natures have offended, they are unquiet till they have hastened satisfaction. This was within his office, to pray for the distressed. *Bp. II.*

18. **Her countenance was no more sad.** She began her devotions in sorrow ; she concludes them in thankfulness and joy. Great is the peace of that heart which has unburdened its cares, and addressed its fervent supplications to God. When we have sought unto God in our distress, we shall obtain either relief or patience. *Bp. II.*—She had by prayer committed her case to God, and left it with him ; and now she was no more perplexed about it. She had prayed for herself, and Eli had prayed for her ; and she believed that God would either give her the mercy she had prayed for, or make up the want of it to her some other way. Prayer is heart's ease to a gracious soul ; the seed of Jacob have found it so, being confident that God will never say unto them, *Seek ye me in vain*. Prayer will smooth the countenance ; it should do so. II.

20. The God of Israel granted her her petition that she had asked of Him. The child which she had prayed for was sent her. She had looked forward to this child's becoming nothing more than a Nazarite—one specially dedicated to God, and employed all the days of his life in the service of the tabernacle and in its holy ministries. But God gave her for a son a great prophet, the first of a long succession of prophets, and one

who was destined to found the monarchy of Israel. He is wont to give more than either we desire or deserve. E. M. G.

Called his name Samuel. She would perpetuate the remembrance of God's favor to her in answering her prayers. Thus she designed upon every mention of his name to take the comfort to herself, and to give God the glory of that gracious condescension. How many seasonable deliverances and supplies may we call *Samuel, asked of God*; and whatever is so we are in a special manner engaged to devote to him. Hannah intended by this name to put her son in mind of the obligation he was under to be the Lord's, in consideration of this, that he was asked of God and was at the same time dedicated to him. H.

24. At last, when the child was weaned, she goes up and pays her vow; and with it pays the interest of her intermission. Never did Hannah go up with so glad a heart to Shiloh, as now that she carries God this reasonable present which himself gave to her, and she vowed to him; accompanied with the bounty of other sacrifices more in number and measure than the law of God required of her; and all this is too little for her God, that so mercifully remembered her affliction and miraculously remedied it. *Bp. H.*—So far was she from thinking that by presenting her son to God she made God her Debtor, that she thought it requisite by these slain offerings to seek God's acceptance of her living sacrifice. All our covenants with God for ourselves and ours must be made by sacrifice, the great Sacrifice. H.

28. Elkanah must have been a consenting party to Hannah's vow, in accordance with the law of Num. 30. Nevertheless, as the first thought of this dedication was Hannah's, Elkanah allows her to take the first part in the transaction, and keeps himself in the background. Yet there are traces of his having been a party to the whole proceeding. In verse 25 we read that "*they* slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli"—not that she alone did so; and in verse 28 we are told that "*he* worshipped the Lord there." The "*he*" is probably Elkanah, who, as head of the family, representative of his wife and child, and as responsible for and concerned in the presentation, offered an act of solemn worship to the Lord. E. M. G.

THE SONG OF HANNAH.

Ch. 2.

Comprehensively, this lofty Psalm refers to the perfections of Jehovah's character, the

wide-reaching operations of His Providence, and the universal establishment of His kingdom. B.

The spirit of Hannah prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God; whose King and Founder is Christ: and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, but with which the humble are filled. *Aug.*—This admirable hymn excels in simplicity of composition, closeness of connection, and uniformity of sentiment; in the breathing of a devout mind, deeply impressed with a conviction of God's mercies to herself in particular, and of his providential government of the world in general; in exalting the poor in spirit or the humble minded, and abasing the rich and arrogant, rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked. Hannah foretells not only the more immediate judgments of God on the Philistines during her son's administration, but his remoter judgments on "the ends of the earth" (verse 10) in the true spirit of the prophecies of Jacob, Balaam, and Moses. Like them, she describes the promised Saviour of the world as a King, before there was any king in Israel: and she first applied to him the remarkable epithet, Messiah in Hebrew, Christ in Greek, and Anointed in English; which was adopted by all the succeeding prophets of the Old Testament, and by the apostles and prophets of the New. *Hales.*

At the close of her song, she breaks forth into a sublime and glowing delineation of the final exaltation and triumph of the King of Zion. And as if to remove every shadow of doubt as to this being the purport and design of Hannah's song, when we open the record of that better era which she but descried in the remote distance, we find the Virgin Mary, in her song of praise at the announcement of Messiah's birth, re-echoing the sentiments, and sometimes even repeating the very words, of the mother of Samuel. Why should the Spirit, breathing at such a time in the soul of Mary, have turned her thoughts so nearly into the channel that had been struck out ages before by the pious Hannah? Or why should the circumstances connected with the birth of Hannah's Nazarite offspring have proved the occasion of strains which so distinctly pointed to the manifestation of the King of Glory, and so closely harmonized with those actually sung in celebration of the event? Doubtless to mark the connection really subsisting between the two. It is the Spirit's own intimation of His ulterior design in transactions long since past, and testimonies delivered centuries before—namely, to herald the advent of Messiah, and familiarize the children of the

kingdom with the essential character of the coming dispensation. P. F.

2 : 1. Prayed. Observe the word prayer, as applied to this song of Hannah's. There is nothing asked of God in it from beginning to end. She had already asked for what she desired, and asked it privately. And her "Father which seeth in secret" had rewarded her "openly," by giving her the child she asked for. And her acknowledgment must be as public as His mercies. Therefore she bursts forth into a song of thanksgiving and praise, here called a prayer; for the homage we render to God, being the principal thing in prayer, and more important than the mere asking for what we want, is in Scripture called prayer. "Hallowed be thy name" is prayer, quite as much as "Give us this day our daily bread."

2, 3. Hannah rehearses three of God's perfections. She speaks of His *holiness*; "There is none holy as the Lord." Mary the Virgin echoes her, when in *her* song she says; "Holy is his name." The earliest meaning of the Hebrew word translated "holy" is "clean, pure." Sin is regarded as the defilement of the mind, just as uncleanness is a defilement of the body. And when God, or His name (that is, His character), is said to be holy, the meaning is that He is altogether free from sin, and absolutely good—perfectly just, perfectly true, perfectly loving. Next Hannah speaks of *the power* of God. "Neither is there any rock," says she, "like our God." So Mary in *her* song calls God, "He that is mighty;" and says, "He hath showed strength with his arm." The third attribute of God which Hannah speaks of is His *wisdom*. "The Lord," she says, "is a God of knowledge," and she gives this proof of it, that "by him actions are weighed." His knowledge reaches to the depths of the character; He is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." E. M. G.

God is infinitely holy, creatures finitely holy. He is holy from Himself, creatures are holy by derivation from Him. He is not only holy, but holiness; holiness in the highest degree is His sole prerogative. It is the essential glory of His nature: His holiness is as necessary as His being, as necessary as His omniscience; as He cannot but know what is right, so He cannot but do what is just. There can be no contradiction or contrariety in the Divine nature, to know what is right, and to do what is wrong: if so there would be a diminution of His blessedness, He would not be a God always blessed, blessed forever, as He is. He is as necessarily holy as He is necessarily God; as necessarily without sin

as without change. As He was God from eternity, so He was holy from eternity. He was gracious, merciful, just in His own nature, and also holy, though no creature had been framed by Him to exercise His grace, mercy, justice, or holiness upon. If God had not created a world, He had in His own nature been Almighty, and able to create a world. If there never had been anything but Himself, yet He had been omniscient, knowing everything that was within the verge and compass of His infinite power; so He was pure in His own nature, though He never had brought forth any rational creature whereby to manifest this purity. These perfections are so necessary that the nature of God could not subsist without them. *Charnock.*

6. God is the sovereign Lord of life and death. *The Lord killeth and maketh alive.* He presides in births and burials. Death is his messenger, strikes whom and when he bids; none are brought to the dust but it is he that brings them down, for in his hand are the *keys of death and the grave*. Whenever any are born, it is he that *makes them alive*. Whenever any are recovered from sickness, and delivered from imminent perils, it is God that bringeth up, for *to him belong the issues from death*.

7, 8. Advancement and abasement are both from him. He brings some *low* and *lifts up* others, humbles the proud and gives grace and honor to the lowly; lays those in the dust that would vie with the God above them, and trample upon all about them (Job 40 : 12, 13); but lifts up those with his salvation that humble themselves before him; those whom he had brought low, when they are sufficiently humbled, he lifteth up. H.

9, 10. A prediction of the preservation and advancement of all God's faithful friends, and the destruction of all his and their enemies. Having testified her joyful triumph in what God had done, and is doing, she concludes with joyful hopes of what he would do. *He will keep the feet of his saints.* There are a people in the world that are God's saints, his select and sanctified ones; and he will keep their feet—that is, all that belongs to them shall be under his protection, he will secure the ground they stand on and establish their goings; he will set a guard of grace upon their affections and actions, that their feet may neither wander out of the way nor stumble in the way. When their feet are ready to slip, *his mercy holdeth them up, and keepeth them from falling*. While we keep God's ways, he will keep our feet. H.

10. She speaks of Christ. And she is the first inspired person who speaks of Him under

the name so familiar to us,—the name of Messiah, or Christ—that is, the anointed One. “God,” says she, “shall exalt the horn of his Messiah,” that is, shall give to his Messiah overwhelming power and victory, shall put all things under Messiah’s feet E. M. G.

The power and honor of Messiah the Prince shall grow and increase more and more. *He shall give strength unto his King*, for the accomplishing of his great undertaking, strengthen him to go through the difficulties of his humiliation, and in his exaltation he will *lift up the head* (Ps. 110 : 7), lift up the horn, the power and honor of his *anointed*, and *make him higher than the kings of the earth* (Ps. 89 : 27). This crowns the triumph, and is, more than anything, the matter of her exaltation. Her *horn is exalted* (verse 1), because she foresees the horn of the Messiah will be so. This secures the hope ; the subjects of Christ’s kingdom will be safe, and the enemies of it will be ruined, for the Anointed, the Lord Christ, is girt with strength, and is able to save and destroy unto the uttermost. H.—The exaltation of the horn of the anointed of Jehovah commenced with the victorious and splendid expansion of the power of David, was repeated with every victory over the enemies of God and his kingdom gained by the successive kings of David’s house, goes on in the advancing spread of the kingdom of Christ, and will eventually attain to its eternal consummation in the judgment of the last day, through which all the enemies of Christ will be made his footstool. *Keil.*

What is the great lesson of this song? That for the answer to prayer, for deliverance from trial, for the fulfilment of hopes, for the glorious things yet spoken of the city of our God, our most cordial thanksgivings are due to God. Every Christian life presents numberless occasions that very specially call for such thanksgiving. But there is one thanksgiving that must take precedence of all—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” W. G. B.

II Samuel’s early connection with the sanctuary had its strengthening and educating effect. It was in the midst of the sanctuary that the Lord’s presence became manifest to him, and that the Divine voice sounded clearly and intelligibly in his ears. We may gather from the fact that there is great virtue in early and affectionate association with the church, and in earnest participation in things that concern the church. Things become related to us only by our coming into affectionate relation with them. There was room in the tabernacle at Shiloh for the young

Samuel to do something. He was not only early planted in the house of the Lord, but early established also in the practical service of the Lord. But great as is the supplementary service which the church can render the child, the home is at once his physical birthplace and his proper spiritual birthplace. It is a Spanish proverb that an ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy. The home is the first church, the hearth-stone the first altar, and the father and mother the first priests. The home-atmosphere is the element in which all the material suited to the nurture of the child becomes prepared and adapted. And so the more home there is in the home, the more readily and completely does it fulfil its offices as a child-church. It is for this reason that no prayers ever touch us so tenderly or remain with us so faithfully as the home prayers. C. H. P.

Godliness in children is accounted by Christians generally to be extraordinary, or at least uncommon, and perhaps there are but few godly children. But there is no theory of Christian doctrine which excludes children from the experience and practice of godly life. In the present state of human nature, the two fundamental principles of religious life are repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is nothing in childhood which prevents repentance and faith becoming living and abiding sources of action in children. We admit that a child’s knowledge of sin is necessarily small, that its sense of sin is feeble, and its sorrow for sin shallow. But then it must be remembered that, comparatively speaking, the actual transgressions of children are but few, and that godly sorrow is a slow growth, even in the adult convert. If the understanding of a child be less enlightened, the soul is more sensitive ; if the judgment be less formed, the conscience is more tender ; if there be but little strength of purpose, the heart is less hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. If decided piety be within reach of a child, how is it that the absence of godliness from children does not more distress us, and that piety in children is not more our aim and hope, and that it is not more frequently the burden of our prayer? Because godliness is not looked for in children ; it is not seen where in many cases it exists ; and the signs of it are not trusted when they are clearly manifest. Godly children are God’s workmanship, created by Jesus Christ, and if we would be the means of leading children into true godliness, we must bid them look to our Saviour Jesus. *S. Martin.*

Section 233.

BASENESS OF ELI'S SONS. GOD'S CHARGE AGAINST ELI, AND FOREWARNING OF FEARFUL PUNISHMENT. CALL OF SAMUEL, AND HIS ESTABLISHMENT AS THE FIRST PROPHET IN ISRAEL.

1 SAMUEL 2 : 12-36 ; 3 : 1-21 ; 4 : 1.

2 12, 13 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial ; they knew not the LORD. And the custom of the priests with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant
14 came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand ; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot ; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest
15 took therewith. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Yea, before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to
16 roast for the priest ; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man said unto him, They will surely burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth ; then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it me now : and if not, I will take it by force.
17 And the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD : for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

18, 19 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she
20 came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which was lent to the LORD.
21 And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old ; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they
23 lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things ? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people. Nay, my
24 sons ; for it is no good report that I hear : ye make the LORD's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, God shall judge him : but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him ? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because
26 the LORD would slay them. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men.

Verses 27-36. *God's message to Eli, affirming his great sin, and its terrible punishment.*

3 1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD
2 was precious in those days ; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when
3 Eli was laid down in his place, (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he could not see,) and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of the
4 LORD, where the ark of God was ; that the LORD called Samuel : and he said, Here am I.
5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ;
6 lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he answered,
7 I called not, my son ; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was
8 the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down :
9 and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD ; for thy servant heareth. So
10 Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak ; for thy servant heareth. And the
11 LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one
12 that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will
13 judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse
14 upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.

15, 16 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son.
 17 And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that *the* LORD hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any-
 18 thing from me of all the things that he spake unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.
 19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the
 20 ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be
 21 a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed him-
 4 1 self to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

The part of the country which may be roughly marked off by a line drawn south of the valley of Shechem has a history of its own, upon which we have little light till the period we have now reached. In this region, though unquestionably not free from idolatry, the authority of the high-priest at Shiloh seems to have been generally respected. That office was now held by Eli, a man of venerable age, of the house of Ithamar, Aaron's younger son. Himself a man of the most sincere piety, he was guilty of sinful weakness in the indulgence he showed to the vices of his sons, whose profligacy disgraced the priesthood and ruined the people. While Eli was high-priest, it pleased God to raise up two champions for Israel whose characters form a contrast far more remarkable than any of Plutarch's parallels. Alike in the Divine announcement of their birth, in being devoted as Nazarites from the womb, and in being early clothed with the spirit of Jehovah, Samson and Samuel exhibit the two extremes of physical energy and moral power, with all the inherent weaknesses of the former, and the majestic strength of the latter. In Samson we see the utmost that human might can do, even as the instrument of the Divine will; in Samuel we behold the omnipotence of prayer. The great faults of the former seem almost inseparable from his physical temperament: the faultlessness of the latter is the fruit of a nature early disciplined into willing subjection to the laws of God. Samuel, the last of the *judges*, was the *first* in that regular succession of *prophets* which never ceased till after the return from the Babylonian Captivity, and was the founder of the monarchy. His name is expressive of the leading feature of his whole history, *the power of prayer*. Himself the child of prayer, he gained all his triumphs by prayer; he is placed at the head of those "who called upon Jehovah, and He answered them;" and he is placed on a level with Moses as an intercessor. P. S.

The tabernacle and the ark were at Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim, from its fortunate cen-

tral position the most powerful, as the least exposed to foreign invasion, of all the provinces. *Milman*.—Shiloh was well fitted to be the seat of ecclesiastical rule, lying as it did well off the main highroad which ran through the country from north to south, lying among hills which fairly shut it in on all sides but one, their sides terraced with vines and olives and fig trees, while in the plain below stood the tabernacle, containing the most precious things in Israel. Well might it have seemed an ideal house of prayer and study, of mild authority and ripe wisdom, where piety and purity and philanthropy might be trained to high perfection for the common good. Yet Shiloh was the scene of the base avarice, the high-handed violence, the vulgar profligacy of the sons of Eli; and Shiloh was the scene of Eli's weakness, so culpable in itself, so fraught with ruin to his family and his home. H. P. L.

12-26. In these verses we have the good character and posture of Elkanah's family, and the bad character and posture of Eli's family; the account of these two is observably interwoven throughout this whole paragraph; as if the historian intended to set the one over against the other, that they might set off one another. The devotion and good order of Elkanah's family aggravated the iniquity of Eli's house; while the wickedness of Eli's sons made Samuel's early piety shine the more bright and illustrious. H.

13-17. The first description we have of Hophni and Phinehas has a terrible terseness: "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial." They had a double parentage: naturally, they were the children of the high-priest; morally, they were the children of iniquity. "Belial" signifies *worthlessness* or *wickedness*, and in the New Testament is used as the personification of evil. Having photographed the characters of Hophni and Phinehas in this one vivid line, the sacred narrative goes on to specify their peculiar transgressions. Their first sin was a lawless violation of the sanctity of the temple-services;

it was a combination of stealing and of sacrilege. When the people came up to the holy place to offer their sacrifices, these two rapacious young priests seized upon a large part of the offerings which were presented—a larger part than they had any right to—and appropriated it to themselves. And, as if robbing the altar were not enough, they committed a robbery against God by destroying the devout veneration which was due to him. *Cayler.*

The men who brought the offerings were more concerned for the honor and glory of God than were his own ministers. They implored the priest to allow the Lord's offerings to be first presented, and then, said they, "take as much as thy soul desireth." The answer was, "Nay, but thou shalt give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force." What wonder that the people were disgusted at these proceedings, and that the result was that they abstained from bringing their peace-offerings to the altar? "Wherefore," we are told, "the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord." This was their offence, and a terrible one it was—amounting to a betrayal of the high trusts committed to their care. Nor was this all—for we are told (verse 22) that they behaved themselves most vilely toward "the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." *Kit.*

18. But. This particle contrasts Samuel's youthful piety with the wickedness of the sons of Eli. There was iniquity all around him—iniquity in holy things. But notwithstanding the wickedness with which he was surrounded, and which might have made him acquainted with evil, coarse, irreverent, and undutiful, in the midst of it all, "Samuel ministered before the Lord" as "a child." *E. M. G.*—The writer dwells upon the contrast between Samuel and the sons of Eli. We see the child attending upon Eli in the sanctuary, growing before the Lord, in favor both with the Lord and with men, chosen to be God's messenger to Eli, and finally re-establishing the broken intercourse between Jehovah and His people. On the other hand we see Hophni and Phinehas abusing their sacred office, sinking from rapacity and profanity to open profligacy, unchecked by rebuke or warning, and at last perishing miserably by the hands of the Philistines. *A. F. K.*

18, 19. Yearly as they came up to the twice-loved service in Shiloh, the parents saw again the child, still serving in the courts of the Lord's house, "girded with a linen ephod." And the gift they brought him each year from home was

that with which Hannah's love best liked to connect her absent child—"a little Meil," or priestly robe in which to do his service. She had made him "the God-asked," and present or absent he was ever such in her loving thoughts. *A. E.*

20, 21. The lad's immediate duty lay in rendering such little services as his age allowed about the person of the high-priest; and, eventually, in some of the lighter services of the tabernacle. So impressed was Eli by the fine qualities of this child—so affected by the circumstances of his birth—and so gratified by the excellent conduct of the pious parents—that he bestowed upon them his solemn blessing, and prayed that they might have rich returns in kind for the child they had so faithfully and entirely lent to the Lord. And so it came to pass. Hannah had afterward three sons and two daughters. This was large interest for her "loan." But the Lord is a very bountiful paymaster; and amid all the fervid speculations which inflame the world, to lend to Him remains the best investment which any one can make of aught that he possesses. *Kit.*

21. The child grew. In stature, no doubt, but also in grace and knowledge, and in all those qualifications which give a man moral and spiritual power. The secret of this growth is told us here—"the child Samuel grew before the Lord." It was not only that he grew up to manhood in the courts of the tabernacle, where God was worshipped, but that the child knew and felt he was in God's presence, and acted accordingly. *E. M. G.*

22-24. He should have rebuked them sharply, their crimes deserved it, their temper needed it; the softness of his dealing with them would but harden them the more. Whether it was because he loved them, or because he feared them, that he dealt thus tenderly with them, it was certainly an evidence of his want of zeal for the honor of God and his sanctuary. He bound them over to God's judgment, but he should have taken cognizance of their crimes himself as high-priest and judge, and have restrained and punished them. What he said was right, but it was not enough. It is sometimes necessary that we put an edge upon the reproofs we give. *H.*

25. Eli's wretched failure was the failure of millions of fathers since his day: when his children were young he would not restrain them, and when they grew older he could not. With a few timid words he vainly strove to subdue the stalwart transgressors whom he had allowed to wax strong and stubborn in their sins, which

had become so rank as to "smell to heaven." It was a mournful proof of the old man's utter and pitiable loss of all power of restraint that the reckless sons would not even "hearken to the voice of their father." The all-righteous God took them into his own hands, and, foreseeing their obdurate impenitence, he was preparing for them a terrible retribution. *Cuyler.*

—Parents need no other means to make them miserable than weak indulgence to their children. Such parents are cruel to themselves and their posterity. Eli could not have devised any way to have plagued himself and his house so much as by his kindness to his children's sins. What variety of judgments doth he soon hear of from the messenger of God! *Bp. H.*

Because the Lord would slay them.

It must be carefully noted that it is not till Pharaoh has turned a deaf ear to repeated warnings, not till the Canaanites have polluted themselves with intolerable abominations, that God hardens their hearts; not till Eli's sons have ignored His existence and defied His laws does He determine to slay them; not till Saul has set at naught his calling and deserted God, is he deserted by Him. Obstinate impenitence may be judicially punished by the withdrawal of the grace which leads to repentance. *A. F. K.*

—There was a time, even with Hophni and Phinehas, there was a time with all the souls who may since have been equally lost, when God willed not to slay them; when His words to them were thus recorded by the Prophet Ezekiel: "Why will ye die? Turn yourselves and live ye." God does speak to us now in the words of Ezekiel. If we are obstinately careless, we shall not listen to the voice of God's word, because we have sinned beyond repentance. Nor will it avail to complain that we should not have been so fatally hardened had the means of good been more sparingly given us; that we should have loved the service of the tabernacle more had we been less familiar with it. The same page of Scripture which tells us of the sons of Eli tells us of Samuel also; brought by his mother, at his earliest years, to be in that same place, and to draw grace and strength from those very ministrations which, to the sons of Eli, had been the savor of death unto death. It is for us to determine whether we will be as Samuel or as Hophni and Phinehas; whether we will gain the habit of profiting by holy things or of despising them. *Arnold.*

27-29. The message this prophet delivers from God is very close. He reminds him of the great things God had done for the house of his fathers, and for his family. He exhibits a high

charge against him and his family; his children did wickedly, and he connived at it, and thereby involved himself in the guilt; the indictment therefore runs against them all. His sons had impiously profaned the holy things of God. Eli had bolstered them up in it, by not punishing their insolence and impiety; "Thou for thy part honorest thy sons above me." *H.*

30. Them that honor Me I will honor, but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. It is one of the grandest sayings in Scripture. It is the eternal rule of the kingdom of God, not limited to the days of Hophni and Phinehas, but eternal as the ordinances of heaven. It is a law confirmed by all history; every man's life confirms it. However men may try to get their destiny into their own hands; however they may secure themselves from this trouble and from that, yet the day of retribution comes at last; having sown to the flesh, of the flesh also they reap corruption. While the men that have honored God, the men that have made their own interests of no account, but have set themselves resolutely to obey God's will and do God's work; the men that have labored in private life and in public service to carry out the great rules of His kingdom,—justice, mercy, the love of God and the love of man,—these are the men that God has honored; these are the men whose work abides; these are the men whose names shine with undying honor. *W. G. B.*

31. God here revokes the decree he had made in favor of him and his family, of being high-priests throughout all generations. This office was first settled upon Eleazar, the eldest son of Aaron; thence came to Phinehas, the eldest son of Eleazar: was transferred from him, probably for some sin or other, to Eli, a descendant of Aaron's youngest son Ithamar, as it is now transferred back to the family of Eleazar, on account of the horrid sins of the sons of Eli. *Bp. Patrick.*

35. I will raise me up a faithful priest. This was fulfilled in Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, who came into Abiathar's place, in the beginning of Solomon's reign, and was faithful to his trust; and the high-priests were of his posterity as long as the Levitical priesthood continued. If some falsify their trust, yet others shall be raised up, that will be true to it. God's work shall never fall to the ground for want of hands to carry it on. *H.*

THE CALL OF SAMUEL.

3 : 1-10.

I. The child Samuel. According to Josephus, Samuel had just completed his twelfth

year when the word of Jehovah came to him. In later times this age was a critical point in the life of a Jewish boy. He then became "a son of the Law," and was regarded as personally responsible for obedience to it. It was at the age of twelve that "the child Jesus" first went up to Jerusalem along with his parents. A. F. K.

The word of the Lord was precious. Meaning that God very rarely in those days revealed his mind to any person. "There was no open vision:" here *vision* includes all the ways by which God revealed himself to men; which he did then so seldom, that whatsoever revelation there might be privately to some persons, there was no one publicly acknowledged to be a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God. *Patrick.*

3. The term "temple" includes the buildings round the Tabernacle, in some of the chambers of which Eli and Samuel were sleeping, not of course in the Tabernacle itself. The *Ark* is expressly mentioned because it was the visible symbol of the Presence of Him from whom the Voice proceeded. A. F. K.

4-8. The call of Samuel was the first step toward superseding Eli, and putting another and more faithful person in his room. It was necessary therefore that Eli should be assured that Samuel's call was from God, and that it was the beginning of the fulfilment of God's threatenings against himself. And how could this be done more forcibly or more naturally than by allowing Samuel to mistake God's voice for Eli's, and bringing him to Eli's bedside in unsuspecting simplicity three times in the course of the night? When the child came the third time, persisting that he had been called, Eli could no longer resist the conviction that it was a Divine call; "Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child."

10. The Lord came, and stood. On this occasion there was something more than a voice summoning Samuel from the holy of holies, as on former occasions. The voice seemed to have drawn nearer; and Samuel saw a form standing by his bedside and speaking to him. It was doubtless the form of that Angel or Messenger of God's Covenant, of whom we read so often in the Old Testament as appearing to patriarchs and prophets, and who was in fact our Lord Jesus before His incarnation. E. M. G.

Samuel was called to be a prophet of God in a great crisis of Jewish history. His appearance was less dramatic than those of Moses and Elijah, but it was almost as momentous. The epoch was one of those which determine the character and destiny of nations. One great act

in the drama of Jewish history was closing, another was opening. Two great revolutions were effected: the one political, the other religious. Samuel was clearly one of those men of manifold gifts and functions whom God raises up in great crises and for great services. His entire course and character were probably determined by the spirit in which he responded to God's first call. *Allon.*

11-14. This awful judgment was nothing else than what is recorded in the next chapter, the entire breaking up of the religious establishment in Shiloh, the place where the tabernacle had been set up in the time of Joshua. It was broken up by the ark's falling into the hands of the Philistines. The taking of the ark was the casting off forever of Shiloh as the place of God's solemnities, and the dissolution of the religious establishment which had grown up there. The judgment lived very long in the memory of God's people. It is spoken of years after in the Psalms: "When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand." And the Prophet Jeremiah, living more than five hundred years after the casting off of Shiloh, foretells that the temple of Jerusalem and the magnificent religious establishment there should share the same fate. "Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, as I have done to Shiloh."

15. Here is a child, on whom the highest honor has been conferred which can be put upon flesh and blood. He has communed with God in the night; the Jehovah-Angel, the second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, has stood over his bed in visible form and spoken to him, and inaugurated, in so doing, a new era of prophecy. Priest and high-priest have been passed over, in the free electing grace of God, for this little servant of the sanctuary, shortly to be made both head of the State, and head of the Church also. How does he receive this marvellous communication? In a way completely to justify the choice made of him by the Divine wisdom. So far from being "exalted above measure" by the vision of the night, he turns in the morning to his ordinary daily task; "he opened the doors of the house of the Lord." E. M. G.

18. The secret is now in the bosom of Samuel; shall he divulge it to Eli? It is one of the sore trials of the prophet's mission; "he feared to show Eli the vision." But Eli would know.

Consciously guilty, his conscience was more than half a prophet of doom. He adjured Samuel most solemnly to tell him every word—and he did. Here a shade of light falls on this picture, otherwise all dark ;—Eli's answer breathes submission to the terrible decision of Jehovah. "It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth to him good." H. C.—His is an admirable faith, and more than human constancy and resolution ; worthy of a heart sacrificed to that God whose justice had refused to expiate his sin by sacrifice ! If Eli had been an ill father to his sons, yet he is a good son to God and is ready to kiss the very rod he shall smart withal. "It is the Lord whom I have ever found holy and just and gracious : and he cannot but be himself. Let him do what seemeth him good ; for whatever seemeth good to him cannot but be good, howsoever it seems to me." *Bp. H.*

19, 20. The Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. His fame grew with his growth, and the words uttered by him at Shiloh came to pass throughout all Israel. P. S.—Samuel's childhood saw the period of Jewish history which Josephus calls the Theocracy, closed with the overthrow of the Sanctuary at Shiloh. The disastrous battle of Aphek brought Israel once more under the Philistine yoke. The Ark was captured, and though sent back after a brief interval, remained unnoticed in a private house. The twenty years which followed are a blank in the history of the nation. The people appear to have abandoned themselves to despair, and sought a vain refuge in the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth. During those twenty years God was training Samuel to be the Deliverer of His people. "All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." A. F. K.

God honored him by making him the founder of a new state of things—a succession of prophets educated and trained to act as a kind of national conscience to His people, guiding them in their perplexities, checking them when they were on the verge of wrong-doing, and reproving them for their sins. And it is because Samuel was the founder of the order of Prophets that Peter (Acts 3) speaks of "all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken." Prophecy, as an institution, dated from Samuel. He founded colleges, where young men might be trained for the prophetic ministry, instructed in sacred learning, and practised in devotional exercises, especially in psalmody and music. E. M. G.

In Samuel—Levite and Nazarite, at the sanc-

tuary of Shiloh, prophet and destined founder of a mightier prophetic power—were united from the first all spiritual gifts most potent for the welfare of the people, and under his powerful control stood the wheels on which the age revolved. He was truly the father of all the great prophets who worked such wonders in the ensuing centuries. *Ewald.*

The throne of the King of Israel was to have beside it this special honor, that one should be ever near who could speak the utterances of Israel's God. For reproof, for direction, for counsel, that voice could ever be awoke. To Saul, to David, to Solomon, to Rehoboam, to Hezekiah, to the founder of the northern kingdom, and to his successors, we hear it from time to time speaking its solemn, alarming, consoling accents. It is ever present as a real abiding power to the kingdom's end ; dying out, at last, in the sad wail of Jeremiah's lamentations. *Wilberforce.*

21. The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord. Here the new method of revelation is purposely indicated, which from that time was the customary one—namely, the "Word of the Lord," that is, the inward converse with the prophet. Samuel is a prophet ; and though before this there were single prophets, yet it is Samuel who first opens the continuous line of prophets in the special sense of the word. Let the words, too, with which his consecration as prophet is introduced (1 S. 3 : 1) be considered. They are not less characteristic than the rest : "And the Word of the Lord was precious (scarce) in those days ; there was no open vision." The usual form of revelation before this was not inward, as with the prophets, but an outward theophany, or manifestation of God. The consecration visions of the prophets, especially those of Isaiah and Ezekiel, form a connecting link between the theophany and the inward communication, since they are accomplished by means of visions. Samuel's consecration, as is agreeable to its historic position, stands nearest the theophany. *Auberlen.*

Suggested Lessons.

It is a most emphatic warning that the story of Eli gives to parents, and to all who have influence or authority of any sort in families. The power may be of various kinds ; it may be superior strength, or weight of character, or example, or that control which seasonable and tender affection wields, and gratitude gladly owns. But whatever it be, let it be faithfully and fully

used. The positive duty lying upon all heads and members of households to seek one another's good in the highest and most spiritual sense, is not more binding, and scarcely more important, than the negative duty of restraining one another's evil. Nor is this a harsh or invidious task. It may be done with all the meekness and gentleness of Christ. And the secret of its being rightly and effectively done is this : Let no one, let nothing, be honored above God—let God be honored above all. Let your intercourse with children, or brothers, or sisters, or domestics, or any with whom you dwell together in families, be upon this principle. Honor God—honor God supremely—honor God alone. Consider not merely what may be best for them, but what, in every instance, is due to God. This will prevent compromise, concession, and fond indulgence on your part ; while it will place your power of restraining evil on the highest of all grounds of advantage—the law and the will of God Himself. *Candlish.*

Life is full of voices of God, only we lack the spiritual faculty which discerns them. When we think of God's voice we think first of God's revelation of His will in the Bible. There are

voices of God's providence, which, if we have docile hearts, we shall not fail to recognize. The instincts and yearnings of our own spiritual nature are an unmistakable voice of God. And to this religious nature God speaks by the motions and monitions of His Holy Spirit ; awakening solitudes, exciting desires, touching impulses. In moments of intellectual perplexity, amid the tempest and earthquake of intellectual strife, the still small voice of the religious soul is heard—God's voice within us. In quieter and more thoughtful moods of life we hear the voice of God. God has voices that reach us in crowds ; distinct, perhaps loud, above every din of business or clamor of strife or song of revelry. In moments of temptation, even, God's voice finds a tongue in some lingering power of conscience, in some sensitive remnants of virtue, in some angel memories of a pious home and an innocent heart. In times of sorrow God's voice comes to us ; summoning us to faith in His will, His purpose, and His presence, and to patience and acquiescence in the sacrifice demanded of us. Most terrible of all is it when the first voice of God that we seriously listen to is a sentence of doom. *Allon.*

Section 234.

PHILISTINE VICTORY AND CAPTURE OF THE ARK. DEATH OF ELI, AND OF THE WIFE OF PHINEHAS. THE ARK AND DAGON. PUNISHMENT OF CITIES HOLDING THE ARK RETURN OF THE ARK TO ISRAEL.

1 SAMUEL 4 : 1-22 ; 5 : 1-12 ; 6 : 1-21 ; 7 : 1.

4 1 Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer :
 2 and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against
 Israel : and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines : and they slew
 3 of the army in the field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the
 camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Phil-
 istines ? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that it may
 4 come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh,
 and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which sitteth upon
 the cherubim : and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the
 5 covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all
 6 Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines
 heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the
 camp of the Hebrews ? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.
 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said,
 8 Woe unto us ! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us ! who shall de-
 liver us out of the hand of these mighty gods ? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians
 9 with all manner of plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye
 Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you : quit your-

10 selves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent : and there was a very great slaughter ; for there fell of Israel thirty
 11 thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken ; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and
 12 Phinehas, were slain. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh
 13 the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo,
 Eli sat upon his seat by the way side watching : for his heart trembled for the ark of God.
 14 And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard
 the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult ? And the man hastened,
 15 and came and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old ; and his eyes were set, that
 16 he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled
 17 to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son ? And he that brought
 the tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a
 great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and
 18 the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that
 he fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died : for
 19 he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter-in-
 law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered : and when she heard the tidings that
 the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed
 20 herself and brought forth ; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the
 women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not ; for thou hast brought forth a son. But she
 21 answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The
 glory is departed from Israel : because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-
 22 law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel ; for the ark of God
 is taken.

5 1 Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and they brought it from Eben-ezer unto
 2 Ashdod. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of Dagon,
 3 and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was
 fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set
 4 him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon
 was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD ; and the head of Dagon
 and both the palms of his hands *lay* cut off upon the threshold ; only *the stump of* Dagon was
 5 left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house,
 tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, unto this day.

Verses 6-12. Divine visitation upon the men of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, of suffering and death.

6 1, 2 And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the
 Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of
 3 the LORD ? shew us wherewith we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away
 the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty ; but in any wise return him a guilt offering :
 then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

Verses 4-9. Further counsel as to the guilt offering and sending the ark upon a new cart drawn by two milch kine.

10 And the men did so ; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their
 11 calves at home : and they put the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice
 12 of gold and the images of their tumors. And the kine took the straight way by the way to
 Beth-shemesh ; they went along the high way, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to
 the right hand or to the left ; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border
 13 of Beth-shemesh. And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley :
 14 and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into
 the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone : and they
 15 clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And
 the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels
 of gold were, and put them on the great stone : and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt
 16 offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of
 the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

Verses 17, 18. Names of cities that returned a guilt offering.

19 And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the
 LORD, even he smote of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand men : and the people

20 mourned, because the Lord had smitten the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? and to whom shall
 21 he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.
 7 1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.

4 : 1-22. The Israelites, unable to withstand their enemies, sent for the ark at Shiloh; and having, in imitation of the Philistines, who carried their gods with them to war, brought the ark into camp, they renewed the fight. But the Philistines, although greatly alarmed by this movement, bravely encouraged one another, in that mutual exhortation long after quoted and applied to Christians by the Apostle Paul: "Be strong and quit yourselves like men;" and the result was the complete discomfiture of the Israelites, the capture of the ark, the death of Hophni and Phinehas—the sons of Eli who carried it—and then the death of Eli himself and of the wife of Phinehas, at the heart-rending tidings. N. C. B.

Not the priesthood only, but the very nation had made itself loathsome before God; and, consequently, terrible judgments from the Lord must needs witness to his hatred of sin and to his justice in its punishment; and were moreover demanded as the last hopeful means for the moral reformation of so many as were not yet hopelessly hardened. Hence came this one day of accumulated horrors. A lost battle; Israel panic-smitten and fleeing; thirty thousand of her dead strewn on the field of battle; the two sons of Eli, acting priests, slain in one day; the ark of God in the hands of uncircumcised Philistines; the aged Eli and the wife of Phinehas dead—the dying mother giving the key-note to the sad wail of that day: "The glory is departed from Israel!" Thus it behooved the God of Israel to testify that he is of purer eye than to behold iniquity; that he can never wink at such flagrant abominations, and, least of all, in those who minister at his altar.

3, 4. All their memory of God's mighty deeds of old was summed up in a superstitious hope from the mere symbol of His presence, which they profaned even while they trusted to its help. The ark was brought from Shiloh by Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, fit ministers of such a sacrilegious act. H. C.—Here was no consulting of the ark which they were about to fetch, no inquiry of Samuel whether they should fetch it, but a headstrong resolution of presumptuous elders to force God into the field, and to challenge success. *Bp. Hall.*

If any ritualities, or sacraments, or religious

symbols ever carried with them the Divine presence, this ark of the covenant did so, for it was God's resting-place and visible abode. If the mere presence of anything sacred to God can save men *in their sins* and despite of their sins, men might surely expect that the ark of God's covenant would carry victory with it, and that God would not allow his name to "go to protest" before idolaters. If there be any saving power in the mere ritualities and sacraments of our holy religion, here was a splendid opportunity to test and display it. H. C.

It was not of God they thought, the living God, but only of the ark. The ark has been changed into a fetish; the name of it is to be their deliverer. To redeem the Israelites from their error, they must learn that the ark is powerless if God forsakes them, and that the symbol cannot save without the living presence. In this stern lesson God uses their enemies as teachers. In this case the Philistines were on the better side. It was not man against God, but man against falsehood under His name, and the battle ended as one might anticipate. Natural human courage proved itself stronger than corrupted religion, and hypocrisy was broken and scattered. *Ker.*

9. These were brave words of brave men whom the desperateness of the emergency moved only to more heroic exertions. "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines." It was the Lord's purpose that they should conquer in this war, and therefore were they thus inspirited to accomplish the purposes of his will. They did conquer. Israel was defeated—the priests were slain—the ark was taken. Thus did the Lord rebuke the vain confidence of the Israelites, and the dishonor they had brought upon his name before the Philistines, by the sanction which their proceedings had given to the pagan delusion, that the presence of God was inseparably connected with aught made with hands. Therefore the ark was suffered to be made captive by the unbelievers.

13-22. The manner in which this sad tale is told far excels anything of the kind which the wide range of literature can furnish. It is one of those traits of pure and simple grandeur in which the Scriptures are unequalled. *Kil.*

17. Ill news doth ever either run or fly. The

man of Benjamin which ran from the host hath soon filled the city with outcries, and Eli's ears with the cry of the city. The good old man sits in the gate, and hears the news of Israel's discomfiture and his sons' death, though with sorrow, yet with patience; but when the messenger tells him of the ark of God taken, he can live no longer: that word strikes him down backward and kills him in the fall: no sword of a Philistine could have slain him more painfully; neither know I whether his neck or his heart were first broken. *Bp. H.*—So fell the high-priest and judge of Israel, when he had lived within two of a hundred years; so fell the crown from his head, when he had judged Israel about forty years; thus did his sun set under a cloud, thus were the folly and wickedness of those sons of his, whom he had indulged, his ruin at last. Thus does God sometimes set marks of his displeasure upon good men in this life, who have misconducted themselves, that others may hear, and fear, and take warning. A man may die miserably, and yet not die eternally; may come to an untimely end, and yet the end be peace. *H.*

This tragic history shows that nothing can be more pitiable than the perversion of the Divine paternal instinct to the ruin of the child and the misery of the parent. The affection is often so partial that it is practically blind. The heart becomes softened into a weak and guilty pity, so that at times the noblest act of parental self-restraint seems a sort of harshness. Parental indulgence is a vice which looks much like a virtue; and while there is no vice so self-justifying there is none more terrible in its penalties. *Mercer.*

21. Saying, The glory is departed from Israel. She is insensible of the death of her father, her husband and herself, in comparison with the loss of the ark of God; calls her son Ichabod, or, "There is no glory;" and says with her last breath, "The glory is departed from Israel." She cares nothing for a posterity which was to want the ark of God; she cares nothing for a son, come into the world of Israel, when God was gone from it; and she departs willingly from them, from whom God was departed. Not outward magnificence, nor wealth, nor the favor of the mighty, but the presence of God in his ordinances, were the glory of Israel; the withdrawing of which was a greater judgment than destruction. *Bp. H.*

22. "The ark of God is taken." Four times in a short chapter does that sentence appear. It is a wail, a funeral dirge. Eli fell back in a swoon and died when he heard it; his daughter-in-law, wife of the dissolute and slain Phinehas,

died in childbirth, and named her son Ichabod—no glory. It was enough to break any heart. The lowest possible point of humiliation had been reached. It was the first of the three captivities that have fallen upon the Jews. The second came when Solomon's temple was destroyed by the armies of Babylon, when the ark was captured a second time, never to be restored. The third came when Jerusalem was crushed by the legions of Titus and the Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth. Nothing is more touching than the weekly gathering of a few Jews at what is called "The Wailing Place" in Jerusalem, where they weep and moan, caressing meanwhile the temple wall with their hands and kissing it with their lips. The key-note to that wail was given by Jeremiah, whose Lamentations has been called "the funeral dirge of the theocracy," when the fire and sword of Nebuchadnezzar had done their ruthless work. And five hundred years before Jeremiah uttered his elegy, with broken heart and streaming eyes, the piercing agony had gone through Israel's heart as the words were repeated from lip to lip, "The ark of God is taken." It produced widespread consternation. It was the palpable judgment of God upon the wickedness of the nation. *Behrends.*

5: 1-5. The Philistines had been permitted by the Lord thus far to triumph, for the accomplishment of his own high purposes. And it remained for Him now to vindicate the honor of his own great name, equally from the despair of the Israelites, and profane exultation of the Philistines. The latter, indeed, by making it a triumph of their own god over the God of Israel, rendered it inevitable that he should move his terrible right arm to redeem his name from reproach. *Kit.*—Having punished Israel that betrayed the ark, by giving it into the hands of the Philistines, he will next deal with those that abused it, and will fetch it out of their hands again. Thus even the *wrath of man shall praise him*; and he is bringing about his own glory, even then when he seems to neglect it. *H.*

Dagon had never so great a day, so many sacrifices, as now, that he seems to take the God of Israel prisoner. What a spectacle was this, to see uncircumcised Philistines laying their profane hands upon the testimony of God's presence! to see the glorious mercy-seat under the roof of an idol! to see the two cherubim spreading their wings under a false god! O foolish Philistines, could ye think that the same house could hold God and Dagon? Could ye think a senseless stone a fit companion and guardian for the living God? Had ye laid your Dagon

upon his face prostrate before the ark, yet would not God have endured the indignity of such a lodging; but now that ye presume to set up your carved stone, equal to his cherubim, go read your folly in the floor of your temple, and know that He which cast your god so low can cast you lower. *Bp. II.*

6-12. Not the god Dagon only, but the men of Ashdod were smitten sorely. "The hand of the Lord destroyed them and smote them with tumors." This scourge was so severe that they said, We cannot have this ark of God among us. So they called a council of Philistine lords, and it was agreed to try it in Gath. "They carried the ark to Gath, and there the Lord smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had tumors in their secret parts." *H. C.*—Their bodies were attacked by a loathsome and painful disease, probably *boils*, which are a characteristic symptom of the Oriental plague. The latter explanation agrees better with the infectiousness and fatality of the scourge. *A. F. K.*—The Gittites sent on the ark to their neighbors of Ekron. The Ekronites were in great alarm. They cried, "They have sent the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people!" Their dismal prognostics were verified. Many died; many were smitten with tumors; while an army of field mice devoured their harvest. *Cox.*

6:1-6. For seven months the ark was carried about through the cities of the Philistines; and at length they resolved to send it back. Under the advice of their priests and diviners, whom it is most interesting to find remonstrating with them for hardening their hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh had done, they sent with it five golden images of mice and five such of the tumors as a trespass-offering. *P. S.*—It is clear that these golden tumors and mice were representations *in form* of the plagues under which they suffered so terribly, and that their purpose was to "give glory to the God of Israel"—a very explicit acknowledgment of his supremacy, and of their own defeat and suffering before him. By these tokens of their suffering they said, to their own shame—"We cannot stand before these manifestations of Jehovah's presence and power."

7-12. As if to make it more sure whether these judgments were fortuitous, or came from the hand of Israel's God, they said—Make a new cart; harness to it two young heifers with young calves, never in yoke before; shut up the calves at home; then start them. If they take the way to Israel's cities, and go on despite of their instincts toward their young confined at home,

then may ye know that God is with his ark, and that these sore afflictions are from his hand. The experiment was decisive. The young cows moved off by the route to Israel, lowing for their calves as they went, and halted not till they brought up at Bethshemesh, a city of Israel. *H. C.*—This was, all things considered, no less than a miracle. That cattle unaccustomed to the yoke should draw so even, so orderly, and still go forward; that, without any driver, they should go from home, and from their own calves; that, without any director, they should go the straight road to Bethshemesh, a city eight or ten miles off, never miss the way, never turn aside into the fields to feed themselves, nor turn back home to feed their calves, yet as they went on lowing for their young ones. *H.*

13. The people of Bethshemesh were at work in the fields, it being harvest-time, when they caught the first sight of the approaching ark. Their delight and exultation at the return of that glory which had departed from Israel cannot well be described. *Kit.*

14, 15. Burnt-offerings and sacrifices rightly testified their gratitude upon the reception of the ark; with these also were presented the "jewels of gold" sent as a guilt-offering by the five cities of Philistia. *B.*

Punishment of the Men of Bethshemesh.

19. Because they had looked into the ark. Better, because they had gazed upon the ark. The expression used signifies rather "to gaze upon with profane curiosity."

The priests of Bethshemesh must have known that even the Levites were forbidden to look upon the furniture of the Holy of Holies upon pain of death (*Nu. 4:19, 20*), but instead of hastening to cover it with befitting reverence, they left it exposed to the public gaze, and brought down a judgment which was intended to vindicate the holiness of Jehovah.

Fifty thousand. It is generally agreed that there is some mistake in the text here. The anomalous order of the numerals in the Hebrew (70 men 50,000 men), and the absence of the conjunction *and* mark corruption. The village of Bethshemesh cannot possibly have contained such a number of inhabitants. It seems best with Josephus and some Heb. mss. to omit 50,000. *A. F. K.*

A woful welcome for the ark of God into the borders of Israel. It killed them for looking upon it, who thought it their life to see it: it dealt blows and death on both hands; to Philistines, to Israelites; to both of them for pro-

faning it, the one with their idol, the other with their eyes. It is a fearful thing to use the holy ordinances of God with an irreverent boldness. Fear and trembling become us in our access to the majesty of the Almighty. *Bp. H.*

7 : 1. The ark, which was the symbol and seal of God's presence in the midst of His people, was now become an unwelcome visitant, suggestive only of danger and of displeasure. One man was found brave enough and loyal enough to open his house for its reception, and to set his son apart to guard it until such time as the breach should be healed. *W. H. G.*—They seem to have done all they could, and with due regard to the requirements of the law, for the custody of the sacred symbol. But Kirjath-jearim was not turned into the seat of the national worship. There is no word of sacrificial or other services being performed there. There is nothing to indicate that the annual feasts were held at this place. The ark had a resting-place there—nothing more. And this lasted for twenty years. *W. G. B.*

For twenty years, as it seems, from this decisive victory Philistia held her cruel heathen sway over the people of Jehovah. Where Samuel was during this interval, we know not. It was doubtless needful for him to be thus for a season withdrawn from action and observation. His holy childhood and his prophetic youth needed calm, silence, introspection, and secret communion with God, to mature the great strength of his after-life. Like Paul in Arabia, like a greater than Paul at Nazareth after that communing in the temple, he was hidden away by God ; hidden, it would seem, like the son of Mary when he left, Jerusalem with her, for al-

most twenty years before he was manifested to Israel. *Wilberforce.*

So ended the period, defined as that during which "the house of God was in Shiloh." So ended the still wider period of the first division of the history of the Chosen People, from Moses to Eli, in the overthrow of the first sanctuary by the Philistines, as the second division and overthrow was to terminate in the fall of the second sanctuary, the Temple of the Jewish monarchy, by the armies of Babylon ; and the third in the still vaster destruction of the last Temple of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus. (Read Jer. 7 : 12, 14 ; 26 : 6.)—This first period of Jewish history had been a period varied and shifting in detail, but with this common feature,—that it was a time of wandering and of strife, of danger and of deliverance, of continual and direct dependence on the help of God alone. *Stanley.*

In the Books of Samuel and the Kings, it is the presence or the absence of the ark which justifies everything that is normal and sufficiently explains everything that is abnormal in the history. Whether at Shiloh, or in the hands of the Philistines, at Kirjath-jearim or on Mount Zion, it is everywhere and always, "the Ark of the Covenant," the silent witness from the period of the exodus. There is but one such ark in Israelitish history, and it renders that history in its main features, especially in its characteristic religious features, indivisible and unimpeachable. The secret of the books is the secret of the ark which stored them and between whose cherubim dwelt Jehovah of hosts. *E. C. B.*

Section 235.

ISRAEL'S TWENTY YEARS' SERVITUDE TO PHILISTINES SUCCEEDED BY REPENTANCE UNDER SAMUEL'S APPEALS. AT HIS INTERCESSION GOD GIVES ISRAEL DECISIVE VICTORY. TWENTY YEARS OF SAMUEL'S JUDGESHIP. ISRAEL ASK A KING.

1 SAMUEL 7 : 2-17 ; 8 : 1-22.

7 2 AND it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time
3 was long ; for it was twenty years : and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your heart, then put away the strange gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only : and he will deliver you out of the hand of the
4 Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and

5 served the LORD only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you
6 unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out
before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD.
And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah,
the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it,
8 they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry
9 unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And
Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering unto the LORD : and
10 Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel ; and the LORD answered him. And as Samuel was
offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel : but the LORD
thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them ; and
11 they were smitten down before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pur-
12 sued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a
stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hith-
13 erto hath the LORD helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more
within the border of Israel : and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days
14 of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel,
from Ekron even unto Gath ; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the
15 Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged
16 Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal,
17 and Mizpah ; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for
there was his house ; and there he judged Israel : and he built there an altar unto the
LORD.

8 1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.
2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel ; and the name of his second, Abijah : they were judges
3 in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took
bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah :
5 and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways : now make
6 us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said,
7 Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto
Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have
8 not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them. According
to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even
unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.
9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice : howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and
shalt shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.
11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you : he will take your
sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen ; and they shall
12 run before his chariots : and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and
captains of fifties ; and *he will set some* to plough his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to
13 make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your
14 daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your
fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his
15 servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his
16 officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and
17 your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth
18 of your flocks : and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your
19 king which ye shall have chosen you ; and the LORD will not answer you in that day. But the
people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel ; and they said, Nay ; but we will have a
20 king over us ; that we also may be like all the nations ; and that our king may judge us, and
21 go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he
22 rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their
voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man
unto his city.

Some visible bond must be found to unite into a solid mass the scattered tribes which could not as yet be firmly bound together into one by the invisible tie of a common allegiance to Jehovah. Material and political means must prepare the way for the spiritual and religious end. Otherwise the nation must cease to exist, ground to pieces between the enemies which surrounded it on all sides. In order to make solid advance, retrogression was inevitable. At this critical juncture God raised up Samuel, "a prophet second only to Moses," to guide the nation through this crisis in its existence, and effect the transition to the second stage of its education. A. F. K.—This was his great achievement, the crowning point of his service to Israel and the God of Israel: the scattered and disunited tribes became again a nation. The rival tribes Ephraim and Judah make common cause against the common enemy; and the more distant tribes do not seem to withhold their allegiance. *Milman*.—He thus, in a marked manner, stood between the new and old, and prepared the way for the establishment of the monarchy. The recognition of Saul as king of all Israel would have been an impossibility had not the judgeship of Samuel already brought about a cohesion between the disorganized members of the Jewish commonwealth. E. V.

After Moses, Samuel was the first character in ancient Jewish history who centred in himself the elements of political and religious authority. He was the last and the greatest of the judges whose official power succeeded that of the law-giver; and he was the first of that long line of prophets whose function and influence came to be superior to that of the priesthood itself. Moreover, his life marked a transition-period in the nation; for he anointed, first Saul, and afterward David, to this office. He was a person of rare dignity, beauty, and integrity of character. J. P. T.—The events of Samuel's administration are so briefly narrated, that we are in danger of failing to take in their full importance. Eli's death left Israel under oppression, a humiliated and ravaged country. Samuel's reign began by a swift, well-ordered, and entirely successful blow for independence, and then kept Israel in a condition of peace, territorial integrity, and prosperity. W. J. B.

THE NATIONAL REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION UNDER SAMUEL.

7 : 2-6.

2. *And it came to pass, etc.* Better, **And it came to pass, from the day when the**

ark rested in Kirjath-jearim, that a long time elapsed, even twenty years. Twenty years was not the whole duration of the ark's sojourn at Kirjath-jearim, but the time that elapsed before the reformation now to be recorded. The period here passed over in silence was a dark page in Israel's history, politically and religiously. They were vassals of the Philistines, reduced apparently to abject submission. The public worship of Jehovah was intermitted; for the Tabernacle seems to have been dismantled, and the ark was in a private house. The people sank into gross idolatry. But meanwhile Samuel was growing in strength and influence, and when the right moment came and the desire for better things sprang up as the fruit of his prophetic labor, he was ready to take his place as the leader of the nation.

Lamented after the Lord. As a child follows the father who has been forced to turn away in anger, and with sighs and tears entreats for reconciliation. A. F. K.—They were stirred up to it, probably, by the preaching of Samuel, with which an extraordinary working of the Spirit of God set in. A general disposition to repentance and reformation now appears throughout all Israel. Dr. Lightfoot thinks this was a matter and time as remarkable as any we read of in Scripture. H.

4. It was the high privilege of Samuel to effect two greatly needed reunions. He reunited the tribes among themselves; he made united Israel once more at one with Jehovah. Under his leadership even Judah and Ephraim work together; at his urgent exhortation "the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtoreth, and served the Lord only." *Plummer*.

5. Mizpeh, where this solemn convocation was held, was a remarkable place in Jewish history. It was in its neighborhood that Samuel set up the stone of help—Ebenezer—saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (verses 6-12). Here, too, the people assembled to choose their first king. Dr. Robinson and Mr. Porter are of opinion that the modern "Neby Samwil" is the ancient Mizpeh. It is a hill 500 or 600 feet high, about four miles northwest from Jerusalem, which commands a wider view than any other peak in the south of Palestine. From its summit, "Central Palestine is spread out round us, like an embossed map. On the north, at our feet, is Gibeon, encircled by its plain. To the right is the rock Rimmon; and more to the eastward the conical tell, crowned by the village Er-Ram, the Ramah of Benjamin. Farther to the right we see the bare top of Tuleil

el-Fû, on which "Gibeah of Saul" once stood. Over the bleak gray ridge on the southeast are the domes and minarets of Jerusalem, looking as if sunk in a valley. Southward the eye ranges over the summits of the Judean hills, as far as the environs of Hebron. On the west, at the base of the mountains, is the plain of Philistia, on which we can distinguish Ramleh, Lydda, and even Joppa, washed by the waves of the Mediterranean." *Murray's Handbook*.

5. I will pray for you. The help which brings deliverance comes *in answer to prayer*. The people make humble confession of sin and call upon God for deliverance. They entreat Samuel that he will "cease not to cry unto the Lord God" for them. While he stands before the altar lifting up his cry in their behalf the Divine interposition takes place and deliverance is effected. The whole record shows the efficacy of prayer. *Witherspoon*.

6. The Chaldee reads it, *They poured out their hearts in repentance before the Lord*. They wept rivers of tears, and sorrowed after a godly sort; for it was before the Lord, and with an eye to him. H.—**8.** The peace, which Israel had made with God, was true, but tender. They durst not trust their own innocency, so much as the prayers of Samuel; "Cease not to cry to the Lord our God for us." *Bp. II.* —**9.** Samuel intercedes with God for them, and does it *by sacrifice*. He took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a *burnt-offering, a whole burnt-offering, to the Lord*, and while the sacrifice was in burning, with the smoke of it his prayers ascended up to heaven for Israel. H.—Samuel officiated, not because he was a regular priest, nor by virtue of his being a Levite, which would have given him no legal right to offer sacrifice; but in his prophetic character as God's ambassador and representative. But that this function was an extraordinary one appears from the fact that it was limited to Samuel alone (1 S. 9 : 13). Samuel is plainly the centre of the religious life of the period. The presence of God, so far as its gracious manifestation to Israel is concerned, is for the time linked with the Prophet, not with the Ark. W. H. G.

10, 11. In answer to Samuel's prayer the Philistines were totally routed, and that in such a manner as highly magnified the prayer of Samuel, the power of God, and the valor of Israel. The prayer of Samuel was honored, for at the very time when he was offering up his sacrifice and his prayer with it, the battle began and turned immediately against the Philistines. Thus *while he was yet speaking God heard and answered in thunder* (Is. 65 : 24). God showed

that it was Samuel's prayer and sacrifice that he had respect to, and hereby let Israel know that as in a former engagement with the Philistines he had justly chastised their presumptuous confidence in the presence of the ark, so now he graciously accepted their humble dependence upon the prayer of faith, from the mouth and heart of a pious prophet. The power of God was greatly honored; for he took the work into his own hand, and discomfited them with a great thunder which frightened them, and put them into such terror and consternation that they fainted away, and became a very easy prey to the sword of Israel, before whom, being thus confounded, they were smitten. Honor was put upon the hosts of Israel; they were made use of for the completing of the victory; *they pursued the Philistines, and smote them*. How soon did they find the benefit of their repentance, and reformation, and return to God! Now that they have thus engaged him for them, none of their enemies can stand before them.

12. Took a stone and set it. Samuel himself took care to set up this monument; he had been instrumental by prayer to obtain the mercy, and therefore he thought himself in a special manner obliged to make this grateful acknowledgment of it. The reason he gives for the name is, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*: in which he speaks thankfully of what was past, giving the glory of the victory to God only, who had added this to all his former favors. H.—It is a memorable fact, which gave a touching emphasis to this memorial, that this was the very place where, twenty years before, the Israelites were defeated, and the ark of God was taken. The stone of help thus became a two-fold monument. *Kit*.

Neither Samuel's intercession nor any soldier's valor is graven there; one name only is associated with it. "*The Lord hath helped us.*" That is the highest use we can make of memory. Many and blessed are its offices, in teaching wisdom, in enriching experience, in bringing sweet odors from the far-off fields of the past, and preserving forever as in a finer spirit joys that in an outward form were evanescent. Some, indeed, only remember in order to indulge a sentimental melancholy. Others live in a bright past in order to nourish self-complacency. But the highest use of memory is to mark more plainly than could be seen at the moment the manifest Divine help which has filled our lives. Many parts of our lives that seemed unmarked by such help in passing, flash up into clearness when seen through the revealing light of memory. So the stone that we rear should bear no



BETHEL.

(Photo of E. L. Wilson.)

name but one. That is the main lesson we should bring from the past, and, thank God, we may write *Ebenezer* on our sorrows no less than on our joys. He helps us by griefs and losses, by disappointments and defeats; for whatever brings us closer to His heart is helpful beyond all other joy, and strength-giving above all other gifts. And such remembrance and voice of praise has in it a half-uttered prayer and hope for the future. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped" looks forward as well as backward, seeing the future in the past. So memory passes into hope, and the radiance in the sky behind us throws brightness on the path in front. God's past reveals His to come. He *has* helped, therefore He *will* help. Such is the argument of that faith which must needs ask for more as long as God can give or man can need. A. M.

13-17. A summary view of the rest of Samuel's life is introduced here, not because it chronologically belongs before ch 8, but because the writer here, as uniformly throughout the book, formally concludes one theme before proceeding to another. With this rapid survey of

the judgeship and life of Samuel, which in point of time extends down to 1 S. 25 : 1, he winds up what he has to say of it separately, and then passes to the reign of Saul, detailing in ch. 8 the circumstances which led to his appointment as king. W. H. G.

13. In all probability the Philistine oppression of forty years mentioned in Ju. 13 : 1 was that which was brought to an end by the battle of Ebenezer. A. F. K.—The independence from the Philistines continued "all the days of Samuel." The natural meaning of this is not all the days of his life, but of his administration as chief magistrate. After Saul's accession, and before Samuel's death, there was a time of Philistine oppression worse than those that had preceded it (13 : 5-22). But the magnitude of the preparations made by the Philistines for this conquest shows what a formidable enemy Israel had become, under Samuel. W. J. B.

16, 17. Samuel went from year to year in circuit to the ancient sanctuaries within his own immediate neighborhood—"Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh"—and "judged Israel in all those

places." But "his return" was always to *Ramah*; "for there was his house, and there he judged Israel, and there he built an altar unto the Lord." *Stanley*. (For cut of *Ramah*, see Sec. 243)

The person of *Samuel*, moved as he was by the prophetic spirit, was now the centre of the nation's life. The sanctuary being rejected, and the agency of the high-priesthood suspended, the mediatorship between God and His people rested with the prophet, who, though not of the priestly race, but by descent a Levite of the region of *Ephraim*, now performed sacrificial services in the presence of the people. The *central sanctuary no longer existing*, we now also find various places of sacrifice, as the high places at *Ramah*, *Bethel* and *Gilgal*. Thus were the bounds imposed by the Mosaic ritual for the first time broken through. Israel attained to the experience that the presence of God is not confined to an appointed and material symbol, but that wherever He is sincerely invoked, He bestows His abundant blessing. Samuel was henceforth judge of the whole nation; and the prophetic office began from this time to develop its agency, on which account the history of Prophetism, properly speaking, dates from Samuel. O.

Here ends the first division of the book, which records Samuel's life and work as the last of the Judges, in connection with the old order of things. The next division opens by relating the steps which led to the establishment of a monarchy, and shows us Samuel as the Mediator between the old and the new régime, effecting a political change of the utmost importance in the history of Israel without the shock of revolution. A. F. K.—The whole of the rest of the book, while adding many interesting particulars about Samuel, is occupied with the establishment of the kingdom and with Saul. With Samuel and Saul we come to the time when the prophet and the king take their due place in the development of Israel. They were both essential to its progress, and the accomplishment of its Divine mission, and in De. 17 : 14–20, and again, 28 : 36, the establishment of the monarchy is spoken of as a virtual necessity. R. P. S.

REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE FOR A KING.

8 : 1–22.

1. When Samuel was old. A considerable time, probably not much less than twenty years, must have elapsed since the victory of *Ebenezer*, before Samuel required the help of his sons on the ground of old age, and some

years more before their misgovernment became so flagrant as to give occasion for the request of the elders. A. F. K.

3. Samuel is not blameworthy for not knowing his sons better, for the misconduct into which they fell was of a nature which could only have been developed by the possession of power. They made haste to be rich, and fell into the temptation which ever attends the inordinate pursuit of worldly gain. The easy way of doing this was to sell justice, and they sold it. "They took bribes, and perverted justice." It is highly creditable to the Hebrews that, from this offence, so common throughout the ancient and modern East, their history is signally and memorably free, though it crept in at a later and more corrupt age, and is sometimes rebuked by the prophets. It must, at this time, have appeared particularly heinous, as contrasted with the spotless administration of Samuel himself. *Kil.*

6. To the priestly office, which had existed since the time of Moses, and to the prophetic office, which had been instituted by Samuel, the kingly office was to be added; and no doubt this was in accordance with the Divine will. These three offices were types of the Messiah, and were to serve the purposes of God's kingdom. It could only be the motives, therefore, which induced the people to ask for a king that were sinful and objectionable. C. G. B.—Wherein lay the criminality of this desire for a king? The pride of power and vanity of display are both blameworthy. But, more than this, the desire embraced a change in that administration which sprung from Divine wisdom, and reposed on Divine authority. Further, this change was a displacement of God. "They have rejected Me." He had been their king. Their legislation was from Him. Tithes were a royal impost. Priests were His palace guards. Their desire, then, was a revolt from His government. *P. Richardson.*

11–18. Samuel now declared to the people all the words of the Lord, stating what a king would demand of them: that he would take their sons for charioteers and horsemen, for captains of his forces, for laborers to till his ground and reap his crops, for mechanics to make his armor and carriages—their daughters, as makers of ointment and perfumes, as cooks and bakers; that he would give the best of their land to his servants, and take the tenth of the produce of their fields and vineyards for his dependents; that he would execute his work with their slaves, their goodliest young men, and their asses; and that he would appropriate the tenth of their

herds ; and moreover, that the Lord would not listen to their complaints against the king of their own choice. C. G. B.

20. We may be like all the nations.

The whole course of things, from the time of Joshua to that of Samuel, demonstrated the necessity of a kingdom. There was need of a strong and permanent central government, if the unity of the people was to be preserved, if they were to be protected from invasion, if law and order were to be established, if Israel was to possess that peace and prosperity which was essential to their development in their proper character as the people of God. It was accordingly the purpose of God that a kingdom should be established in Israel ; this was necessary to the accomplishment of the Divine plans concerning them ; and this would afford a new and expressive type of the coming Saviour, as the king of his people. Nevertheless, the necessity for this, after all, arose out of the culpable weakness of the people, and their inability to realize as yet the true Mosaic ideal. If the people had continued faithful to God, theirs would have been the strongest and most beneficent government on the face of the earth. All their weakness and oppressions were the direct result of their disloyalty and sin. It was the glory of Israel that they "dwelt alone," and that they were "separated" in character and destiny from all the nations of the world. And for them to hanker after a likeness to other nations was disowning and renouncing their high prerogative. W. H. G.

That our king may go out before us and fight our battles. Other nations on every side—the Philistines, the Hittites, Syria, Ammon, Moab, and Edom—seemed to them prosperous and strong under their kings. So, overlooking the fact that the Lord was their King, or, at least, making far too little account of it, they thought to rival their neighbors to better purpose if they too had a king. It is not altogether strange that the experience of several hundred years under the judges and without any judge should have made this political reasoning seem to them plausible. Their mistake had its roots in their leaving God out of the account and in overlooking their peculiar relations to him as their Sovereign, Redeemer, and Father. But [as already noted] there were some good reasons for the change. The tribes of Israel, whether considered politically or religiously, needed more consolidation. Their national experience, from Joshua to Samuel, bore this testimony. In the midst of so many powerful enemies, the most effective union would give them none too much strength. And it had be-

come manifest that the Mosaic religious system needed for its best results a great national capital which might become the religious as well as the political centre of the whole people. H. C.

Samuel's Work, and Fitness for It.

Samuel, next to Moses the lawgiver, may be called the reformer of Israel. He it was who aroused the nation as with lightning strokes, and who produced an awakening like that of Pentecost. As from Moses the prophet, so from Samuel the seer went forth a power which brought many into the sphere of his own Divine enthusiasm. *Delitsch*.—The whole of his work and influence, in opposition to the dead legitimacy of the house of Eli the high-priest, rested on his character and his personal relation to Jehovah. This is manifest in the fact, that he on one side is a prophet, on the other is an intercessor. As prophet, he comes before the people in the name of God : as intercessor, he comes before God in the name of the people. The Word of God and prayer are correlates. Samuel was recognized by the people not simply as prophet, but also on the ground of many actual occurrences, as intercessor. We see how deeply the picture of Moses and Samuel, with their wonderful power in prayer, was imprinted on the mind of the nation, from Ps. 99 : 6, where we read, "Moses and Aaron (leaders of the choir) among His priests, and Samuel (superintendent overseer, in front place) among those who call on His name : they called on the Lord, and He answered them." We thus are, unsought, permitted to behold, as it were looking into a most ancient temple, a living, personal intercourse with God and the heavenly world, to which a whole nation points as the basis of its life. *Auberlen*.

Loyalty to God and to God's nation was the very foundation of Samuel's life. Anything like self-seeking was unknown to him. He had early undergone that momentous change when God is substituted for self as the pivot of one's life. The claims of the great King were ever paramount in his eyes. What would please God and be honoring to Him, was the first question that rose to his mind. And as Israel was God's people, so the interest and the welfare of Israel were ever dear to him. And thus it was that Samuel might be relied on not to think of himself, not to think of his own wishes or interests, except as utterly subordinate to the wishes and interests of his God and his nation. It was this that gave such solidity to Samuel's character, and made him so invaluable to his people. That Samuel attained the highest reputation for

sanctity, intercourse with God and holy influence, is plain from various passages of Scripture. In Jer. 15 : 1, his name is coupled with that of Moses alone as a powerful intercessor, " Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." W. G. B.

Section 236.

SAUL, PROVIDENTIALLY BROUGHT TO SAMUEL, IS ENTERTAINED AND ANOINTED BY HIM. SAUL RECEIVES THE PROPHEPIC SPIRIT. SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

1 SAMUEL 9 : 1-27 ; 10 : 1-16.

9 1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor.
2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a young man and a goodly : and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he : from his shoulders and upward he was higher
3 than any of the people. And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

Verses 4-14. *Saul's search brings him to Ramah and to a meeting with Samuel.*

15, 16 Now the LORD had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines :
17 for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man of whom I spake to thee ! this same shall have
18 authority over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I
19 pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer ; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day : and in the morning I will
20 let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them ; for they are found. And for whom is all that is
21 desirable in Israel ? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house ? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel ? and my family the least
22 of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin ? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this
23 manner ? And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty
24 persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I
25 said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which hath been reserved ! set it before
26 thee and eat ; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And when they were come down
27 from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. And they arose early : and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the
28 housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of
29 them, he and Samuel, abroad. As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said
30 to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still at this time,
31 that I may cause thee to hear the word of God. Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that the LORD hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance ?

Verses 2-8. Samuel assures Saul by three signs. He will meet : (1) two men at a certain place with word from his home ; (2) three men at another point bearing gifts for him ; (3) a band of prophets at yet another point whom he shall be moved to join. Samuel further bids Saul tarry at Gilgal seven days until his coming.

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart : and all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him ; and the spirit

11 of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetimes saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, And who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were not found, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

The Divine direction for which prophet and people were to wait was not long withheld. Its object, if we may venture to judge, was to embody in the person of the new king the ideal which Israel had had in view in making their demand for a monarchy. He should possess all the natural attractions and martial qualities which the people could desiderate in their king; he should reflect their religious standpoint at its best; but he should also represent their national failings and the inmost defect of their religious life: that of combining zeal for the religion of Jehovah, and outward conformity to it, with utter want of real heart submission to the Lord, and of true devotedness to Him. In truth, the history of Saul is a summary and a reflection of that of Israel. A monarchy such as his must first succeed, and finally fail when, under the test of trials, its inmost tendencies would be brought to light. Such a reign was also necessary, in order to bring out what was the real meaning of the people's demand, and to prepare Israel for the king of God's election and selection in the person of David. A. E.

The Lord did not refuse the people's request, as He would have done if the thing desired had been in itself sinful, and the appointment of a king had been at variance with the Divine constitution of Israel. But He granted it in such a way as to teach them that while the kingdom, with God's presence and favor, might be a great blessing, it would be the reverse if erected and maintained in a spirit of insubordination to the Divine will and authority. He gave them first in Saul a king without God, then in David a king after God's own heart. W. H. G.

9:2. To an Oriental people, a stately and commanding personality was essential to an ideal king. Nor could any one have more fully realized the wishes of the people in this respect than Saul. "A choice young man and a goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." W. G. B.

3. How far God fetches his purposes about! The asses of Kish, Saul's father, are strayed away: what is that to the news of a kingdom? God lays these small accidents for the ground of greater designs: the asses must be lost; none but Saul must go with his father's servant to seek them; Samuel shall meet them in the search. *Bp. II.*

4-6. They seek for them two days in vain; resolve at last to return, but finding themselves near Ramah, the dwelling of Samuel, the servant suggests that they should consult the prophet. How simple, how trivial, we might say; how purely accidental, how remote from any visible connection with the filling up of the throne of a kingdom—all the incidents of this search after these lost asses. Yet all foreseen—all pre-arranged—fitted in with a Divine communication made to Samuel (verses 15, 16), to whom the very day and hour of Saul's coming to him were pre-announced, they all formed part of that plan or method by which the Divine purpose relative to Saul's elevation to the throne of Israel was at once indicated and executed. What was true of this part of Saul's history was as true of every other part of it; and what was true of him is as true of every other man—as true of each of our lives. All is under the eye, all moves obedient to the will of God: his power preserving all, his wisdom directing all; the great and the little, the seemingly trivial and the apparently important, conspiring together to fulfil his ends. The truth is, we must either bring God into all, or keep God out of all. To him and to his presiding Providence all must be attributed—all or nothing. Never, if but the right idea of Him be in our thoughts—never can we bring Him in too often, or associate Him too closely, too constantly, with the whole current of our existence, with every incident of every hour of every day. *Hanna.*

15, 16. Little did Saul think that his coming and his errand was so noted of God, as that it was fore-signified unto the prophet; and now, behold Samuel is told a day before of the man,

time, and place of his meeting. **17.** The same God, that foreshadowed Saul to Samuel, now points to him, "See, this is the man;" and commands the prophet to anoint him governor over Israel. He that told of Saul before he came, knew before he came into the world what a man, what a king he would be; yet he chooseth him out, and enjoins his anointing. *Bp. H.*

19-27. To prepare Saul, it was necessary to fall forth in him expectations, it might be vague, of great things; to inspire him with absolute confidence in Samuel as the medium through whom God spake; and finally, by converse on the deepest concerns of Israel, to bring out what lay inmost in his heart, and to direct it to its proper goal. Accordingly, Samuel invited Saul first to the feast and then to his house, at the outset intimating that he would tell him all that was in his heart. A. E.— "Go up before me," said the prophet, "to the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart." The young Benjamite obeys, little prepared for what ensues. Strange that when the sacrifice is over, and the thirty invited guests—all men of mark—sit down to the feast, that there should be a place at such a table and among such guests for one so young and so unknown; stranger, that that place should be the one of highest honor; stranger still, that as the feast went on, the portion, prepared and reserved as for some peculiarly distinguished guest, should be set before him, and that the prophet should turn to him and say before them all, "Set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people." But strangest of all, the private interview that follows. The sun has set, the feast is over, the guests are gone, when Samuel summons him to the house-top, and there reveals to him the purpose of the Eternal, and tells him that he is to be called to the throne of Israel. Night and sleep break up the conference; but soon as the day dawns Samuel hastens to renew it. They go forth together; and so soon as they get clear of the town, Samuel says to Saul, "Bid the servant pass on before us, but stand thou still awhile, that I may show thee the word of God." Who can tell us what that word of the Lord was which, when once more alone, the prophet poured into Saul's listening ear? Deeper far than all the impressions already made were those created by the words of the aged and honored delegate of Heaven—who closed and crowned all by drawing out a vial of oil and pouring it on Saul's bent head, and kissing him,

and saying, "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" *Hanna.*

It was the kiss of congratulation upon the dignity to which he had been raised; and, while it indicated the dignified respect of Samuel to the man appointed to reign over the house of Israel, it also testified his cheerful acquiescence in the appointment, and his willingness to hand over the government to him. No man ever resigned the first power of the state into other hands with so much courtesy, tenderness, dignity, and grace. Samuel was truly a great man. *Kil.*

The sacred oil was used for Saul's ordination as for a Priest. He was the "Lord's Anointed" in a peculiar sense, that invested his person with a special sanctity. And from him the name of "the Anointed One" was handed on till it received in the latest days of the Jewish Church its very highest application,—in Hebrew, or Aramaic, the *Messiah*; in Greek, the *Christ*. *Stanley.*—The pure, golden, gently flowing oil, where used in worship, is in general a symbol of the Divine nature and spirit. In the regal consecration, it sets forth the unimpeachable Divine majesty transferred to the person of the anointed one. Only the king is called absolutely "the Lord's anointed" (1 S. 24:6), and, indeed, the king of Israel, of God's people. As certainly as God stood to this people in a special covenant-relation, must its rightful king stand in nearer relation to Jehovah, being the depositary and representative of Divine majesty. Certainly we have here a complete contrast to the deification of kings, such as we often meet with on heathen soil. Israel's king is never the personification or incarnation of Deity, but always remains accountable to his God, and is called to account by God's messengers, since this God is holy, and gives living revelations of Himself. The Lord who conferred this dignity can also take it away again, but of course only He. *Orelli.*

10:2. Take Saul as you see him before the first wrong step was taken that gave its false bias to all his after-life, how amiable, how attractive does his character appear! He was no mere boy when his father's asses were lost; he was old enough to be himself a father. Yet he did not think that the parental authority had ceased, the filial obligation departed. Two days he had sought the asses diligently, doing what his father had commanded, but the third he said to the servant that was with him, "Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." And Saul did not misjudge the affection that his father bore

him ; on his return home two men met him, dispatched in haste, and said, " Lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?" All this tells strongly in his favor who had established such a place for himself in his father's heart, and who proved himself such a jealous guardian of that place. *Hanna.*

2-8. Samuel gave him overwhelming evidence of the truth of his commission, by foretelling to him several of the incidents of his day's journey. These signs must have removed from Saul's mind any lingering doubt or suspicion. *Sime.*

9. God gave him another heart. Lit. "turned him another heart." The Divine inspiration transformed the simple countryman into the King and Deliverer of Israel. The *heart* in Scripture denotes "the centre of the whole mental and spiritual life of will, desire, thought, perception, and feeling." A. F. K.—In the language of Holy Scripture, his "heart," that is, in Old Testament language, the spring of his feeling, purposing, and willing, was "turned into another" from what it had been, and he was "turned into another man," with quite other thoughts, aims, and desires than before. The difference between this and what in the New Testament is designated as "the new man," is too obvious to require detailed explanation. But we notice two important points : as in the one case it was only an overpowering influence of the Spirit of Elohim, not the abiding Presence of the Paraclete, so the moral effects produced through that influence were not primary, but secondary, and, so to speak, reflex, while those of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of God's people are direct, primary, and permanent. A. E.

Called suddenly as he was to his royal station, he was endowed with high courage and nobility of spirit. His whole subsequent history, however, shows that he had never been renewed in the spirit of his mind—even amid the apparent solicitude for God's honor which he sometimes assumed, you can discover nothing like the influence of religious principle. *Mason.*—How much may a man get from heaven, how far may he be carried on, and yet break down. We may become quite other men from what we once were, and yet not such as Christ would have us to be. There may be an influence of the Spirit furnishing us for many a good and fruitful work on earth, and yet it may not be that unction of the Holy One which guides unto all truth, and unto all holiness, and seals us unto the day of eternal redemption. *Hanna.*

All those signs came to pass that day. Saul had not advanced far on his journey before "the signs," given to him by Samuel, began to come to pass. At the tomb of Rachel he lighted on two men, who told him of the finding of the asses. This was the first sign promised. The second befell a little farther on, at the oak (plain) of Tabor. Meeting Saul, apparently at a cross-road, came three men, who, after a friendly greeting, told him they were "going up to God, to God's house." One of them was bearing three kids, another three rounds of bread, and the third a skin of wine.

10-12. The third sign befell them as they approached "the hill." As he and his servant passed a rising-ground or Bamah, close to the place, a band of prophets was seen coming down the slope. *Sime.*—Moving to the music of psaltery, tabret, pipe, and harp, the prophetic afflatus falls upon them ; they prophesy ; and the scene becomes so inspiring, the sympathies of men so moved go forth with such power upon other souls, that even Saul catches the inspiration and he prophesies ! H. C.—Saul himself was overcome of the Spirit of the Lord, prophesied with them, and was as it were changed into another man. People asked in astonishment : "What is this that has come unto the son of Kish ? Is Saul also among the prophets?" A man of the people, however, asked : "Who then is *their* father?"—the father of the prophets. That is, Is the gift of prophecy a consequence of noble birth, and not much rather a free gift from above ? *Delitsch.*—But it seems evident, from the surprise occasioned by his appearance among the prophets, that he had never shown any zeal for the glory and worship of Jehovah ; and the sudden ecstasy at Gibeah, having no foundation of spiritual principle, came to naught. Alas ! men may sing spiritual songs with emotion who have no enduring spiritual life. D. F.

SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

1 S. 10 : 10 and 19 : 20.

The sacerdotal order was originally the instrument by which the members of the Jewish theocracy were taught and governed in things spiritual. But during the time of the judges the priesthood sank into a state of degeneracy, and the people were no longer affected by the acted lessons of the ceremonial service. They required less enigmatic warnings and exhortations. Under these circumstances a new moral power was evoked—the Prophetic Order. Samuel was the instrument used at once for effecting a re-

form in the sacerdotal order, and for giving to the prophets a position of importance which they had never before held. So important was the work wrought by him that he is classed in Holy Scripture with Moses (Jer. 15 : 1 ; Ps. 99 : 6 ; Acts 3 : 24), Samuel being the great religious reformer and organizer of the prophetic order, as Moses was the great legislator and founder of the priestly rule. Samuel took measures to make his work of restoration permanent. For this purpose he instituted companies, or colleges of prophets. One we find in his lifetime at Ramah ; others afterward at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and elsewhere. Their constitution and object were similar to those of theological colleges. Into them were gathered promising students, and here they were trained for the office which they were afterward destined to fulfil. Their chief subject of study was, no doubt, the law and its interpretation ; oral, as distinct from symbolical, teaching being henceforward tacitly transferred from the priestly to the prophetic order. Subsidiary subjects of instruction were music and sacred poetry, both of which had been connected with prophecy from the time of Moses (Ex. 15 : 20) and the judges. Having been themselves trained and taught, the prophets, whether still residing within their college, or having left its precincts, had the task of teaching others. P. S.

Samuel was the Founder of the Prophetic Order. Individuals in previous ages had been endowed with prophetic gifts, but with Samuel commenced the regular succession of prophets which lasted all through the period of the Monarchy, and did not cease until after the Captivity. The degeneracy into which the Priesthood had fallen during the period of the Judges demanded the establishment of a new order for the religious training of the nation. For this purpose Samuel founded the institutions known as *the Schools of the Prophets*. The "company of prophets" at Gibeah (1 S. 10 : 10), and the scene at Ramah described in 1 S. 19 : 18, imply a regular organization. These societies are only definitely mentioned again in connection with the history of Elijah and Elisha, but doubtless continued to exist in the interval. By means of these the Order was maintained. Students were educated, and common religious exercises nurtured and developed spiritual gifts. But it was not all members of the Order who possessed special prophetic gifts ; nor was it among them only that the gifts of inspiration were found. The prophets were the privy-councillors of kings, historians of the nation, instructors of the people. It was their function to be preachers

of righteousness to rich and poor alike : to condemn idolatry in the court, oppression among the nobles, injustice among the judges, formality among the priests. They were the interpreters of the Law, who drew out by degrees the spiritual significance which underlay ritual observance, and labored to prevent sacrifice and Sabbath and festival from becoming dead and unmeaning forms. Strong in the unshaken consciousness that they were expressing the Divine will, they spoke and acted with a fearless courage which no threats could daunt or silence. Thus they proved a counterpoise to the Despotism of Monarchy and the Formalism of Priesthood. In a remarkable passage in his "Essay on Representative Government," Mr. J. S. Mill attributes to their influence the progress which distinguished the Jews from other Oriental nations. "The Jews," he writes, "had an absolute monarchy and a hierarchy. These did for them what was done for other Oriental races by their institutions—subdued them to industry and order, and gave them a national life. But neither their kings nor their priests ever obtained, as in those other countries, the exclusive moulding of their character. Their religion gave existence to an inestimably precious institution, the Order of Prophets. Under the protection, generally though not always effectual, of their sacred character, the Prophets were a power in the nation, often more than a match for kings and priests, and kept up in that little corner of the earth the antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress." A. F. K.

This then was one part of the labors of Samuel. He laid the foundation and fostered the rapid growth of a grand system of national education. At Ramah he trained men to be Israel's teachers ; but he did not confine himself to this. Most of the great ornaments of David's court were his disciples, and it is probable that large numbers of the wealthy and more promising youth of the kingdom went to his schools simply to learn something of those wonderful arts of reading and writing, which opened so new a world to the youth of a race always distinguished for its intellectual aptitudes. And through them Samuel raised the whole people mentally and morally. Trained men henceforward were never wanting for high service both at court and throughout the land. Other results followed of which the whole world reaps the benefit. The gift of a series of inspired men would have been impossible had Israel continued in the state of ignorance into which it had sunk in the time of the Judges. Brave fighting men there might

have been plenty ; occasionally a man of witty jest and proverb like Samson ; an Isaiah never. He and his compeers were educated men, speaking to an educated people, and themselves foremost in the rank of teachers. When inspired prophecy ceased, gradually the scribes took the prophets' place ; so much so that in the Chaldee Targum "prophet" is often translated "scribe ;" and however inferior their work, yet they kept learning alive. The Old Testament was the fruit of Samuel's schools, and so also was the New. The noble tree which he had planted was still vigorous when our Lord traversed the land of Israel ; for none but an educated people could have understood his teaching, and retained it in their memories, and

taught it to mankind. If Paul added to the teaching of Gamaliel the intellectual training of a Greek university, it was in order that he might give to Christian teaching that many-sidedness which was necessary for its reception by Greek and barbarian as well as by Jew. But side by side with him in equal perfectness stands the Jewish John. And it was Samuel who laid the broad foundations of that culture which, carried on first by prophets and then by scribes, made the Jews capable of writing the Bible, of translating the Old Testament into Greek, of teaching its principles in most of the cities of Greece, and finally of going forth as missionaries, carrying with them the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. R. P. S.

Section 237.

PUBLIC ELECTION OF SAUL AS KING. HIS VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES. HIS GENEROUS FORBEARANCE.

1 SAMUEL 10 : 17-27 ; 11 : 1-13.

10 17, 18 AND Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpah ; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the
19 kingdoms that oppressed you : but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses ; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your
20 thousands. So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was
21 taken. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families, and the family of the Matrites was taken : and Saul the son of Kish was taken ; but when they sought him, he could
22 not be found. Therefore they asked of the LORD further, Is there yet a man to come hither ;
23 And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence ; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the
24 people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people ? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid
26 it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah ; and there went with him the host, whose hearts God
27 had touched. But certain sons of Belial said, How shall this man save us ? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

11 1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead : and all
2 the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your
3 right eyes be put out ; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the
4 borders of Israel : and then, if there be none to save us, we will come out to thee. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people : and all
5 the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field ; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep ? And they told him the words

6 of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those
 7 words, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in
 pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying,
 Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.
 8 And the dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out as one man. And he num-
 bered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men
 9 of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say
 unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliver-
 10 ance. And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore
 the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that
 11 seemeth good unto you. And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three com-
 panies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and smote the Am-
 monites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scat-
 12 tered, so that two of them were not left together. And the people said unto Samuel, Who is
 13 he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And
 Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought
 deliverance in Israel.

THE PUBLIC ELECTION OF SAUL AS KING.

10 : 17-27.

The thread of the narrative in ch. 8, which has been temporarily dropped in order to give an account of the circumstances by which Samuel was privately made acquainted with the man whom Jehovah had chosen to rule his people, is now resumed, and Saul's public election by lot to the regal office described. Since the revelation to Samuel and the choice by lot were equally declarations of Jehovah's will, there could be no contradiction between them: the latter publicly confirmed the former for the satisfaction of the people.

17. Samuel called the people together. He convoked the national assembly or "congregation of Israel," which had made the request for a king through its representative elders (8 : 4). This body was composed of all Israelites of twenty years old and upward, who had not forfeited their privileges, together with foreigners admitted upon certain conditions. Its political functions were necessarily limited by the nature of the theocracy, and consisted rather in accepting the declared will of Jehovah than in originating measures of its own. Thus: the Law was solemnly accepted by it. Leaders and kings chosen by Divine command were presented to it for approval, as on the present occasion, and in the case of Joshua. In later times some of the kings appear to have been actually elected by it. It possessed a national judicial authority. It claimed some voice in questions of alliance and peace and war. A. F. K.

17. Mizpah. The highest hill in the neighborhood is the well-known Neby Samwil, the ancient *Mizpah*, the most conspicuous spot in the whole country round, commanding a view

of Jerusalem. It rises abruptly from the table-land, with terraced and well-cultivated sides, to a height of 500 or 600 feet. From its peak Gibeon, Ataroth, Beeroth, Ophrah, Rimmon, Ramah, Gibeah, are all distinctly seen; Gilead, Moab, Bethlehem, the hills of Hebron, the Plain of Sharon, and the Mediterranean are visible in the far distance. It was, therefore, well named *Mizpah*, "the watch-tower." H. B. T.

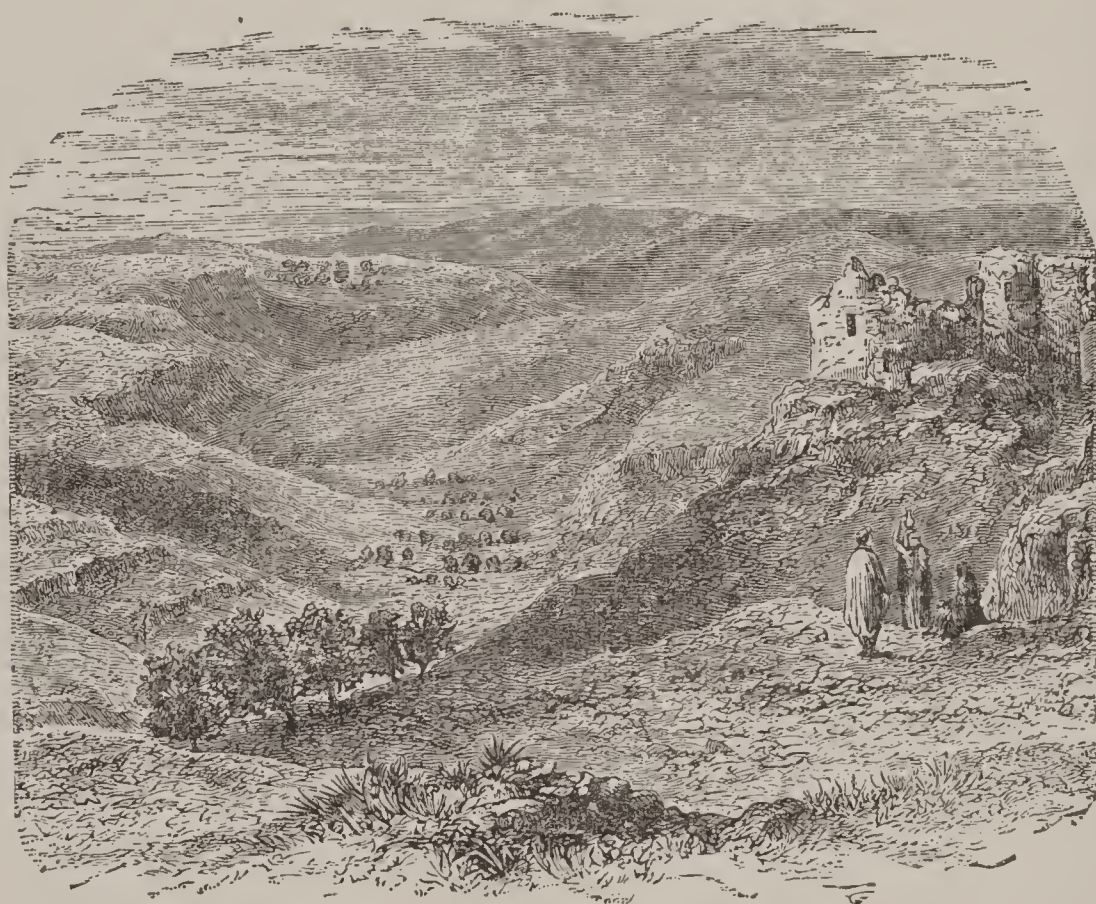
19. The lots must now be cast *before the Lord*, although God had already appointed the king. It was requisite for Israel to learn that the choice of a king was not to be left in the power of human error or to chance; that no other but Jehovah is the *Sovereign Elector*, upon whom it depends who shall be king. C. G. B.—God, who is ever constant to his own decrees, makes the lots to find him out whom Samuel had anointed. If once we have notice of the will of God, we may be confident of the issue: there is no chance to the Almighty; even casual things are no less necessary in their first cause than the natural. Bp. II.

20-24. In obedience to his direction, the people "present themselves before the Lord by their tribes and by their thousands," and first the tribe, then the family, and lastly the individual chosen is revealed. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, is given by God to His people as their king. Drawn out of his hiding-place, he is presented by Samuel to the assembled nation with words of generous commendation: "See ye him," he cries, pointing to the chosen one as he stands towering above the crowd by his shoulders and upward—"See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people." The people joyfully accept the goodly young monarch,

and receive him with shouts of "Long live the king!" E. V.

25. Here again, and more fully than before (1 S. 8 : 11-18), Samuel told the people "the manner of the kingdom," and "wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord." "The manner of the king" as explained to the people on the former occasion gave them one side of the case—the license he would take to make exactions upon them of all best things for his royal state; but here "*the manner of the kingdom*" seems rather to mean the royal charter or constitution according to which he was to administer the government under Jehovah their Supreme King. Inasmuch as the Lord had anticipated this very result—the demand and necessity for

the Lord had consented should be set up in his person. He was not to rule as by his own right; he was not to govern for his own glory. *Hanna.* —And if, in the result, we find the Hebrew monarchy less absolute than generally among eastern nations—if the people retained possession of more of their natural and social rights than in other eastern kingdoms—and if the strong exertion of kingly power was in after ages resented by them as a wrong instead of being recognized as a just prerogative—it is entirely owing to the sagacious care and forethought of Samuel, acting under Divine direction, in securing from utter destruction at the outset the liberties which the people so wilfully cast into the fire. In fact, the more deeply we contem-



GIBEAH, SAUL'S HOME.

a king—and had provided for it in the civil code given through Moses (De. 17 : 14-20), it can scarcely be doubted that this chapter of restrictions and regulations was precisely the royal charter which Samuel rehearsed on this occasion to the people and wrote it in *the* book (so the Hebrew), and placed it in the national archives. Among other things it provided that the king should have a copy of "this law" for his special use, that he might consult it daily in person and guide his administration by it through all his life. H. C.

In presence of all the people, the first of the prophets, standing before the first of the kings, would have him distinctly to understand that it was no absolute unlimited monarchy that

plate the character of Samuel, the more its greatness grows upon us; and the more distinctly we recognize the most truly illustrious character in Hebrew history since Moses. Thus, under Divine sanction, and amid the despotisms of the East, arose the earliest example of a constitutional monarchy. *Kil.*

26. After the national convention at Mizpah, in which the lot fell on Saul, and he was acknowledged to be their king by all the heads of the tribes, he retired to Gibeah and resumed his ordinary occupations; taking on him none of the state, exercising none of the powers and prerogatives of royalty. *Hanna.*

27. It is emphatically remarked, that "Saul held his peace." *That* was kingly. He was

content to bide his time. He knew that the state of affairs around must soon afford him an opportunity of acquiring the personal consideration he yet lacked ; and he felt that any show of resentment, and bald assertion of his authority till then, would only expose him to derision. The opportunity he must have greatly desired was very soon afforded. *Kit.*

SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES.

11 : 1-11.

1. Then. Simply **And.** There is nothing in the Hebrew text to mark whether the interval was long or short. We may gather from ch. 12 : 12 that an Ammonite attack was threatened before Saul's election, and probably the actual invasion took place not long after.

Nahash the Ammonite. South and east of the Israelite settlements on the eastern side of the Jordan dwelt the powerful tribes of the Ammonites and Moabites. The Ammonites appear to have lived north and the Moabites south of the Arnon. The Ammonites were a fierce marauding tribe : the Moabites a settled and civilized nation. United by the tie of common descent from Lot, they were generally in alliance against Israel. Twice during the period of the Judges they "oppressed Israel." After their defeat by Jephthah, the Ammonites are not mentioned until the present occasion. A. F. K.

3. The Jabesh-Gileadites will first try whether their brother Israelites on the other side of the river will not do something to rescue them from so revolting an outrage. They ask a respite of seven days, at the end of which, if no one come to save them, they promise to surrender at discretion. Trusting to the jealousy between the tribes that dwelt on the different sides of the Jordan, or too confident in his own strength to care for what they might do, Nahash grants the request. *Hanna.*—We may also infer that Divine Providence thus far restrained his hands in order to give to the new monarch an opportunity of affording such signal proof of his capacity, decision, and military conduct, as might win for him the general admiration of his subjects and secure his full possession of the royal power to which he had been appointed. *Kit.*

5. Came after the herd out of the field. It hence appears that Saul now lived retired in rustic occupations, exercising no authority over the people, but leaving all to the management of Samuel. *Patrick.*

6 "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul when he heard the tidings." The Spirit of the

Lord evidently means here that spirit of courage, of noble energy, of dauntless resolution, which was needed to meet the emergency that had arisen. His first act was a symbolical one, very rough in its nature, but an act of the kind that was best fitted to make an impression on an Eastern people. W. G. B.—**7.** A couple of the oxen belonging to Saul are slaughtered on the spot, and cut in pieces. "Go to all the borders of Israel," he said to the messengers, "and proclaim that thus shall it be done to the oxen of every one who followeth not after Saul and Samuel." He named the trysting-place and the day of meeting. A ring of triumph sounded from his words and acts. "All the borders of Israel" was the borrowing of a phrase used by the elders of Jabesh when they spoke with Nahash. *Sime.*

8. Bezek, opposite to Jabesh-Gilead on Saul's own side of the Jordan, is named as the place of rendezvous. The summons is so responded to that on the morning of the sixth day from that on which the messengers left the beleaguered city, Saul finds himself at Bezek at the head of upward of three hundred thousand men. *Hanna.*

10. That which appears most to have contributed to the fatal security of the Ammonites was the subtle message sent out by the Jabeshites, that having in vain implored the help of their brethren beyond the river, they had now no resource left but to march out the next morning, and cast themselves upon the mercy of the Ammonitish king. This news, once spread through the camp, could not fail to render the guards and sentinels still more remiss and negligent.

11. This transmission of messages—this raising of an army (and not only simply calling into action troops standing ready for service)—this march of that large army by difficult roads—this review of it—and the final march to meet the enemy—and the complete and sudden victory within so short a time, far surpasses anything we find in modern warfare. The Ammonites were so humbled by this great overthrow, that we do not read of any further hostilities between them and the Israelites during the remainder of Saul's reign, nor indeed until the latter end of that of David. *Kit.*

11. Jabesh was rescued from destruction, and its inhabitants long remembered the debt of gratitude which they owed to Saul. It was the men of Jabesh who at peril of their lives recovered the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from Philistine insults, and gave them honorable burial (ch. 31 : 11-14) : it was Gilead which was the chief centre and stay of the waning fortunes of

Saul's house during the early part of the reign of David (2 S. 2 : 8, 9 ff.). A. F. K.

12, 13. How noble were these beginnings of Saul! His prophecy showed him miraculously wise, his battle and victory no less valiant, his pardon of his rebels as merciful: there was not more power showed in overcoming the Ammonites than in overcoming himself, and the impotent malice of these mutinous Israelites. Now Israel sees they have a king that can both shed blood and spare it; that can shed the Ammonites' blood and spare theirs: his mercy wins those hearts whom his valor could not. *Bp. H.*

We can hardly conceive a more promising commencement to a reign, or one more calculated to gather power and work deliverance for Israel. Saul's is just the character of many a young man, full of high and noble feeling, modest, and distrustful of self, coming from a religious home or the influence of religious impressions, and placed in a post of responsibility, of activity. All is promise; we look for high distinction of the best kind, and for bright and blessed deeds for God and for good. *Alford.*—It was a glorious victory, the first one that Saul won, but that act of clemency was its noblest crown. His first exercise of power is to rescue Israel from threatened bondage, and his first opportunity of vengeance he turns into an opportunity of forgiveness. Such is Saul as he first takes into his hands the Jewish sceptre. His after history presents one gathering thickening mass of error, remorse, jealousy, anger, melancholy, madness, ending all in mournful suicide. But never let us forget how that dark history began, that it is the same Saul that was so dutiful and tender to his father, so modest among his fellows, so generous to his enemies, whose career we are about to trace. Looking at his life in its dark close, we see before us a moral wreck; but it was a noble vessel that went to pieces. But why was the history of that wreck written by the pen of inspiration? And why does that shattered vessel still lie there before us? Why but that He who knows how dangerous an ocean it is that we have to traverse, and how treacherous the coasts along which the voyage lies, would not leave us without all kinds of warning given. And we shall be all the better prepared to take home to our hearts those moral and spiritual

warnings that that wreck gives forth, if we carry with us the remembrance of what a goodly, kindly, generous, and noble nature it was of which the shattered relics remain. *Hanna.*

Self-control, promptitude, courage, capacity, ascription of praise to God, forbearance toward men, these are all exhibited by the young king. Yet from this moral elevation Saul miserably fell. He who seemed to be the rising hope of Israel became one of the most hapless and tragical personages in all his nation's history. He who showed at first patience and self-control became a restless, jealous king. His great fault was wilfulness, leading to the most foolish impatience, and wretched envy. He who executed his first military exploit so skilfully, and with such complete success, became notorious for his failures. And, at last, he who had shown such fearless readiness to set upon the Ammonites was afraid to encounter the Philistines. Not that his natural courage had died out of him, but the sustaining faith in God was gone. "God is departed from me, and answereth me no more." He who was so averse to shed the blood of disaffected subjects shed the blood of many faithful men, as of the priests of the Lord, and hurled the javelin from his own hand again and again at the worthiest of all his subjects, hating him without a cause. The true character of a man will show itself. No veil will cover it; no prudential consideration can bind it. Sooner or later it will have its way. The higher the promise of virtue, the greater the momentum of him who falls from his integrity, the farther he goes into evil. The path of the wilful and proud is one of waning light and thickening darkness; but "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more until the perfect day." *D. F.*

Than that of Saul there is no history which, as we read it, brings home to us a stronger sense, perhaps none so strong a sense, of this life which each one of us is living, as a life of probation; no history which makes us so vividly to realize the fact that God takes men and puts them in certain conditions to try them; to see how they will bear themselves under these conditions, how far they will profit by the opportunities for good, resist the solicitations to evil, which these will inevitably offer to them. *Abp. Trench.*

Section 238.

SAUL'S KINGSHIP CONFIRMED AT GILGAL. SAMUEL'S ADDRESS AT THE SURRENDER OF HIS JUDGESHIP.

1 SAMUEL 11 : 14, 15 ; 12 : 1-25.

11 14 THEN said Samuel to the people, Come and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal ; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal ; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the LORD ; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

12 1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you : and I am old and grayheaded ; and, behold, my sons are with you : and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day. Here I am : witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed : whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness. And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that appointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in this place. But they forgot the LORD their God, and he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Habor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth : but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled in safety. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us : when the LORD your God was your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for : and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the LORD your God, *well* : but if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers. Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day ? I will call unto the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain ; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD ; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day : and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not : for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not : ye have indeed done all this evil : yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart ; and turn ye not aside : for *then should ye go* after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake : because it hath pleased the LORD to make you a people unto himself. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you : but I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart : for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

THE ASSEMBLY AT GILGAL.

11 : 14, 15.

14. Go to Gilgal. This was almost certainly the Gilgal between Bethel and Shiloh, the place of Joshua's long encampment, not the Gilgal near Jericho. The movement is "to," not "down to" Gilgal. This Gilgal is central and easily accessible to the tribes, while the other is not. B.—The assembly now held after the general levy for the war was probably larger and more representative of the whole nation than the previous one at Mizpah. A. F. K.

15. Jabesh-Gilead was saved ; and Saul was brought before the people as their hero, their king, owned of God, and competent to lead their armies on to glorious victory. It was the moment for renewing the kingdom to Saul ; so Samuel leads the whole army to Gilgal where they performed the services of a solemn inauguration ; sacrificed their peace-offerings before the Lord and rejoiced with great joy. Saul was now king of Israel indeed, with all the prestige for a successful reign that any monarch could desire. H. C.—The choice of Saul as king, privately made by God through Samuel, and publicly confirmed by the election at Mizpah, had received an unmistakable ratification in his victory over Nahash. His detractors were silenced, and the unanimous consent of the people accepted him.

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

12 : 1-25.

The assembly at Gilgal marks an important epoch in Jewish history. It ratified the work of the assembly at Mizpah, finally closed the period of the Judges, and formally inaugurated the New Monarchy. Samuel, though he was still to retain his influence and authority as *Prophet*, now resigned his office as *Judge*, and in doing so delivered a solemn address to the assembled people. He challenges them to impeach his official purity (1-3), and is answered by the unanimous confirmation of his integrity (4, 5). Recalling Jehovah's past mercies, he upbraids them with unbelief and ingratitude in demanding a king (6-12). And now their future depends upon their bearing toward Jehovah, in confirmation of which he appeals to a miraculous sign (13-18). Finally Samuel consoles the terrified people (19), by assuring them of Jehovah's faithfulness (20-22), and his own continued intercession (23), and concludes with a reiterated warning (24, 25). A. F. K.

In laying down his power in the presence of the assembled states, it surely became him to declare the principle of the Divine government

—to vindicate his own administration—to pronounce his view of the present condition of the nation—and give solemn cautions and warnings as to the future. He spoke only as he had always spoken ; and he might now finally, and once for all, declare his mind the more freely, seeing that the authority of the king was now fully established, and that the monarchy was to be taken as an accomplished fact—a fact accomplished through his own instrumentality. His object was not to lead them to recall the step they had taken, but to insure their good conduct and their proper subservience to Jehovah, as still not only their spiritual, but their political Lord, under the new institutions. *Kit.*

3-5. It was not so much the trial of his carriage that Samuel appealed for, as his justification ; not for his own comfort, so much as their conviction. His innocence hath not done him service enough, unless it shame them, and make them confess themselves faulty. In so many years wherein Samuel judged Israel, it cannot be but many thousand causes passed his hands, wherein both parties could not possibly be pleased ; yet so clear doth he find his heart and hands, that he dare make the grieved part judges of his judgment. *Bp. II.*

3. A rare example of such virtues, in these days especially, Samuel's hands were as clear of bribes as of blood. The public good his only object, he neither aimed at political ascendancy nor pecuniary aggrandizement. Neither animated with the love of power nor of money, he made no use of the opportunities his office afforded to enrich himself. His hands were clean. No stain tarnished the brightness of the old man's name ; nor, though feeling, no doubt, all the partialities of a father for his children, did he attempt to palliate their crimes, or screen them from public indignation. Walking in his integrity ; fearing God, but no man's face ; upright ; the soul of honor ; his bosom glowing with the purest patriotism, how grand is his last appearance on the stage of public life ! *Guthrie.*—The public officer, who, like Samuel, can challenge the most rigid scrutiny of his life, and can appeal to all the world for a verdict of his integrity, has a prouder name than office could bestow, and a richer inheritance for his children than all the spoils of office could yield. J. P. T.

17, 18. The harvest in Judea began about the end of June or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain were never known : the seasons of rain are only in the spring and autumn ; the one called the *former*, the other the *latter* rain. Therefore Samuel, by this preamble,

"Is it not wheat harvest to-day?" meant to signify the greatness of the miracle which God was about to work; that he could at a time when they least of all expected it deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved for their great wickedness in rejecting him and his prophet. *Stackhouse*.—And therefore when, at the prayer of Samuel, the Lord sent thunder and rain in the time of wheat harvest, such an unusual phenomenon happening immediately according to the prophet's prediction, was justly considered as an authentic sign of his having spoken by the Divine authority. *Blaney*.

Samuel called unto the Lord, and, in answer to his prayer, even while he was yet speaking, *the Lord sent thunder and rain*. By this Samuel made it to appear, not only what a powerful influence God has upon this earth, that he could, of a sudden, when natural causes did not work toward it, produce this dreadful rain and thunder, and bring them out of his treasures, but also what a powerful interest *he* had in heaven, that God would thus *hearken to the voice of a man*, and answer him *in the secret place of thunder* (Ps. 81 : 7). Samuel, that son of prayer, was still famous for success in prayer. H.

19. No sooner hath Samuel's voice ceased, than God's voice begins : every bolt of thunder spake judgment against the rebellious Israelites, and every drop of rain was a witness of their sin ; and now they found they had displeased him, which ruleth in the heaven, by rejecting the man that ruled for him on earth. The thundering voice of God, that had lately in their sight confounded the Philistines, they now understood to speak fearful things against them. No marvel, if now they fell upon their knees, not to Saul whom they had chosen, but to Samuel ; who, being thus cast off by them, is thus countenanced in heaven. *Bp. H.*

The point that most impresses us is that in his person mortal man stands so very near to God. We see him continually made the vehicle of communication from God to men. Over against this, he bears up words of prayer and of confession from men to God. The people recognize his wonderful power with God in prayer and put all confidence in his success before the throne. The time had then fully come in the history of the nation when there was need of such a medium of words from God to men, and also from men back to God. Such men are a great moral power in whatever age they appear. H. C.—This illustrious prophet, like his predecessor Moses, was mighty to intercede for his backsliding people, and has placed the duty of public intercession on its firmest basis, the sin

incurred by neglecting it on the part of the ministers of religion, and of the guardians of the State. *Hales*.

22. Samuel reminds them that it was not they that had chosen God ; it was God that had chosen them. "The Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people." This was a great ground of comfort for Israel. The eternal God had chosen them and made them His people for great purposes of His own. It was involved in this very choice and purpose of God that He would keep His hand on them, and preserve them from all such calamities as would prevent them from fulfilling His purpose. Fickle and changeable, they might easily be induced to break away from Him ; but, strong and unchangeable, He could never be induced to abandon His purpose in them. And if this was a comfort to Israel then, there is a corresponding comfort to the spiritual Israel now. W. G. B.

23. God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. Paul lays down intercessory prayer as a positive command, and makes it the primary obligation of every Christian. We are never walking so exactly and so closely in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as when we are praying for others. We never more effectually benefit ourselves than when we pray for others. We have no talent of greater usefulness than the talent of intercessory prayer. Every other channel of good is circumscribed, and illness and absence take their place. But this has no limit. Wherever we are, under whatever circumstances, we can do it ; and in doing it, we can reach those otherwise perfectly inaccessible to us—the guiltiest and the farthest off from God. *Vaughan*.

Samuel would not withdraw himself from all care for Israel's future. There remained to him the two greatest weapons for moral effect—prayer and teaching. The one points to God in heaven, the other to men on the earth. Such are a prophet's weapons, and they are mightier than a king's sceptre or a warrior's sword. That the intellectual and the moral are the highest forms of greatness and usefulness is a truth which has established itself throughout all history. The most illustrious and influential of the Hebrew race were the prophets. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, none of the kings compare with these, except David and Solomon, and they because they had qualities resembling those of the prophets—the one of them a poet, and the other a sage. D. F.

24, 25. Confronting them with their sins,

and persuading them to heart-felt contrition, he points out to them anew the way of life. He sums up all in the clear, solemn words, "Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." Thus in Gilgal a word is spoken for all time. Into that vital word nothing accidental or circumstantial enters. The law of national life is written as with the pen of the Medes and Persians. The basis of true national prosperity is revealed forevermore. In simplest paraphrase it stands now as then, that highest national well-being is only secured by hearty obedience to God. Let history be read with perceiving eyes. If one so chooses, let him, for the time, forego the word of Samuel and of Scripture. Let him seek, on any rational grounds, an interpretation of historic facts. The flood, as testified by universal tradition, coming upon a guilty, desperate world. Abraham founding a nation that honored righteousness, and that nation establishing itself in the midst of many and mighty foes. The Canaanitish peoples, inhuman and wicked, driven out of their land. Assyria sinking in corruption, and subjugated by the Chaldean Nabopolassar. Babylon yielding to unholy pride, and laid waste by Cyrus. Persia reckless of right, only to be scourged by Alexander, and possessed by the Moslem. Egypt mocking justice, and then trodden under foot by Cambyes, and degraded from her rank by Augustus Cæsar. Macedon neglecting virtue, and soon the Roman plundering her cities and the Turk polluting her soil. The Greeks coming to put art and luxury above truth, and the dwellers by the Tiber and the Apennines threshing them as with flails. Rome, herself, mocking at purity and peace, until the Goths and the Huns sacked her treasures, and Constantine set the cross on the highest of her hills. Even the children of Abraham, in their disregard of righteousness, scattered and peeled and counted a reproach on the earth! How shall we explain those sober facts? What does it mean, that no nation which has followed holiness has been permanently devastated, and that no nation which has been prevailingly wicked has permanently prospered? Why is it that to-day those

nations are strongest which are most mindful of truth and most faithful to right? Why is it that the forces which are evidently destined to prevail have their home in Christian nations? Beyond peradventure, the rational answer is that which recognizes God as in it all, and as moving thus with determined purpose. That answer is the only solution of the observed facts. Let, then, the nations, in their full amenableness to God, heed the words of Samuel to Israel. Out of the whirlwind and tempest of our national disasters God has thundered his curse upon disobedience toward himself and his holy law. The basis of true national prosperity is given in the prophet's words: "Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart." *L. T. Chamberlain.*

Samuel forms one of the noble trio concerning whom the Holy Ghost has recorded no actual transgression in the Scriptures. As partakers of the taint of Adam's sin, they must have erred at least in thought, but the fact remains that of Joseph, Samuel, and Daniel, the faithful Scriptures record no fault. *M. J.*

What an example Samuel presents to our magistrates, our judges, our legislators, and to all intrusted with authority! And how should all who love their God and country pray that every post of honor and of public trust may be filled with a man of the type of Samuel! The fear of man bringeth a snare; but who, like Samuel, has the fear of God is raised above it. The favor of God is life; and who, like Samuel, seeks it will not be drawn aside by that of man. God is the judge of all, both of the quick and of the dead; and who, like Samuel, carries a sense of that to the bench of justice will keep the ermine of his robes unstained, and give righteous judgment; who, like Samuel, takes the Word of God for his rule, and looks to the recompense of reward, may meet with the ingratitude, but will never betray the interests of his country. Religion is the root of honor; piety the only true foundation of patriotism; and the best defence of a country, a people nursed up in godliness—of such virtue, energy, and high *morale*, animated with a courage which raises them above the fear of death. *Guthrie.*

Section 239.

GATHERING OF PHILISTINES IN MICHMASH. SAUL'S FIRST DISOBEDIENCE AT THE LOWER GILGAL. JONATHAN'S DEVOUT COURAGE LEADS TO A DIVINE DISCOMFITURE OF THE PHILISTINE HOSTS. SAUL'S RASH OATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES TO THE FAINTING SOLDIERY. JONATHAN RESCUED FROM SAUL'S UNJUST CONDEMNATION.

1 SAMUEL 13 : 1-23 ; 14 : 1-46.

13 1 SAUL was [*thirty*] years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned two years over
2 Israel. And Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel ; whereof two thousand were with Saul
in Michmash and in the mount of Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of
3 Benjamin : and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the
garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew
4 the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say
that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomina-
tion with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.
5 And the Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand
chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in
6 multitude : and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven. When the
men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people
7 did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in holds, and in pits. Now
some of the Hebrews had gone over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead ; but as for Saul, he
was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.
8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed* : but Samuel
9 came not to Gilgal ; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither
10 the burnt-offering to me, and the peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering. And it
came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Sam-
11 uel came ; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What
hast thou done ? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and
that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves
12 together at Michmash ; therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gil-
gal, and I have not intreated the favor of the LORD : I forced myself therefore, and offered
13 the burnt-offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept
the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee : for now would the LORD
14 have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not con-
tinue : the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath appointed
him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD command-
ed thee.
15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul num-
16 bered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men. And Saul, and Jona-
than his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Geba of Benjamin : but
the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

Verses 17-23. Incursions of three Philistine bands. General disarmament of Israelites (long prior to the events here narrated).

14 1 Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that
bare his armor, Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But
2 he told not his father. And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate
3 tree which is in Migron : and the people that were with him were about six hundred men ; and
Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli the priest of
the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.
4 And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison,
there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side : and the name of
5 the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on the north in

6 front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised : it may be that the LORD will work for us : for there is no restraint to the LORD to 7 save by many or by few. And his armor-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart : 8 turn thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we 9 will pass over unto the men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you ; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto 10 them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us ; then we will go up : for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand : and this shall be the sign unto us. And both of them discovered 11 themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines : and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews 12 come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor-bearer, Come up after me : for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor-bearer after him : and they fell before Jonathan ; and his armor-bearer 14 slew them after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor bearer made, 15 was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people ; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled : and the earth quaked ; so there was an exceeding great trembling. 16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked ; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went *hither* and thither.

17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. 18 And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was *there* at that 19 time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased : and Saul said unto 20 the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle : and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, 21 *and there was* a very great discomfiture. Now the Hebrews that were with the Philistines as beforetime, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about ; even they 22 also *turned* to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the 23 Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved 31 Israel that day ; and the battle passed over by Beth-aven. And they smote of the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon.

Verses 24-46. Saul's selfish and hurtful command to abstain from food, causing a breach of the ritual law by the exhausted army. Jonathan rescued from Saul's unjust judgment of death.

It was the object of the historian to trace the course of events, remarkable and instructive in themselves, which placed on the throne the most illustrious of Israel's kings. Hence of the earlier years of Saul's reign no note is made (except his one exploit, 1 S. 11 : 4-11), till from a young man (ch. 9 : 2) he had become mature in years, with a son already grown to manhood (ch. 13 : 2, 3). The fortunes of the kingdom meanwhile had greatly changed, as may be seen by comparing ch. 11 : 8 with 13 : 2, 19-22. There is a chasm in the narrative, which after an interval of some years is resumed in the thirteenth chapter. *Conant.*

Saul appears to have been a young man at the time of his election. But in the Philistine war of chs. 13, 14, his son Jonathan is already a trusted warrior (13 : 2), twenty years old at least. The natural inference is that a period of at least

ten or fifteen years is passed over in silence between ch. 9 and ch. 13. This interval allows time for the development of Saul's character. It would be strange indeed that he should at once flatly disobey the prophet to whom he owed his elevation : but if some time had elapsed since his election the act becomes much more intelligible. A. F. K.

13 : 1. Saul must have been reigning at this point more than two years. The Hebrew for the first clause, "Saul reigned one year," according to universal and therefore decisive Hebrew usage, must refer, not to the duration of his reign, but to *his age when he began to reign*. Saul was the son of — years in [at the point of beginning] his reigning. The numeral for either twenty or thirty has probably dropped out, the sense intended being—Saul was twenty and one years of age (or thirty and one) when he began

to reign. A similar omission is probable in the second clause: "And when he had reigned [perhaps] twenty and two years over Israel," these events that follow took place. H. C.—The Hebrew is the common formula for denoting the age of a king at his accession, and the length of his reign. We must render, "Saul was [] years old when he began to reign, and reigned [] and two years over Israel." Either the numbers were wanting in the original document, or they have been accidentally lost. Thirty is supplied in the first place by some mss. of the Septuagint, and is a plausible conjecture. A. F. K.

2-4. The Wady Suweinit is a ravine which forms one of two passes leading up from the Jordan Valley at Gilgal, south of and partly parallel with the route of Joshua up to Ai and Bethel. On the northern side of this ravine, four miles south of Bethel, is Michmash, referred to so often in this narrative. At this point the ravine is very deep, as may be seen in the illustration on page 289. On its southern eminence lay Geba, at this time a garrisoned outpost of the Philistines, while Saul was encamped in Michmash. (The case is reversed in verse 16.) At the same time Jonathan lay with his thousand men at Gibeah, south of Geba. B.—The villages of *Mûlchmâs* and *Jeba* preserve the names and mark the sites of Michmash and Geba. They stand on the north and south respectively of the *Wady es Suweinit*, a deep ravine with precipitous sides running from the highlands of Benjamin to Jericho. "About two miles southeast of Ai it becomes a narrow gorge with vertical precipices some 800 feet high." Jonathan was in Gibeah, a few miles to the southwest of Geba. A. F. K.

All suddenly Jonathan fell upon this garrison at Geba, smote and dislodged them. It startled the Philistines as would a clap of thunder from a clear sky, and the people of all Philistia seem to have rushed to arms to maintain their supremacy and to avenge themselves for this defeat. H. C.—The Philistines advanced in overwhelming strength, and compelling Saul to withdraw to Gilgal, on the Jordan, pitched their camp in Michmash. *Wilson*.

5-7. The army with which the Philistines now invaded the land was the largest and best appointed which they had yet brought into the field. From their position at Gilgal the Israelites could see that mighty host, and under the influence of terror rapidly melted away. The situation was indeed becoming critical in the extreme. Day by day the number of deserters increased, and even those who yet remained

"behind him" "were terrified." And still Saul waited from day to day. A. E.

8-14. Saul was in deep solicitude; it was his crisis of moral trial. Samuel had told him (10 : 8) to tarry seven days till himself should come, when he would offer the requisite sacrifices, and seek help from their God. Saul waited till the morning of the seventh day; then, impatient of Samuel's delay, and lacking the repose of real trust in God, he ordered the sacrifice to proceed. Scarcely had he finished when Samuel came up; rebuked his disregard of the Divine directions and his lack of faith in God; frankly told him he had done foolishly; had forfeited his position as the accepted king of God's people, and must be, sooner or later, superseded by one who would obey his Divine Sovereign implicitly and trust him with all his heart. Thus Saul was weighed in the balances of this searching test and found wanting. Obedience less than implicit and absolute is no real obedience at all. Saul made shipwreck on the point of this vital distinction. From this time onward his career was downward and rapid. H. C.

In the deed itself and in the excuse offered for it lay the seeds of all those vices of character that afterward so fully and so fatally developed themselves in his disastrous career. An impulsiveness that would not wait to consider—an impatience that could not brook restraint—a self-will that would not bow its neck to any yoke—a self-deception, if not untruthfulness, that put lying excuses into his lips, and taught him to use the tyrant's plea—a superstition which placed that value on the mere form of a religious act that belongs only to the spirit in which it is performed—and a godless independence and insubordination that made light of the direction and aid of heaven, and threw off the authority of God,—all these lay folded up in embryo here. *Hanna*.—The tendency of the man was to emancipate himself from God's law and make himself supreme, to follow his own bent and natural impulse, to the setting aside of God's positive commands. Saul desired to be his own master, and he was left to himself by God. In this its first king, as in a mirror, behold Israel itself. Israel, like Saul, has turned to his own way. Because he hath rejected the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected him from being king. In this character, behold multitudes among ourselves reflected. How many there are with whom everything for time and for eternity trembles in the balance, and the question is whether they will serve the Lord in life or whether they will not. *Alford*.

14. A man after God's own heart. This expression occurs only here and in the quotation (Acts 13 : 22), "I have found David the son of Jesse a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." It was uttered by Samuel on the occasion of his *reproving* Saul for not obeying the commandment of the Lord (verse 13). B. D.—"The man after God's own heart" stands in opposition to the character of Saul, who is described as acting foolishly by breaking the commandment of God, and rejected by him; that is, deprived of the succession to the crown in his family, on account of his folly, presumption, and disobedience. It therefore means, one who would obey the commandments of God delivered to him by his prophets, and whom, therefore, God would *thus far* approve and continue to favor. *Chandler.*

David, more perfectly than any in high place before or after, realized in his public and private capacity the true duty and real privilege of submission and obedience; and it was on account of this more than with regard to his private character, which with all his faults was very lovely, that he was honored with this high distinction. The difference between him and Saul was that his heart was right—his public principle was right—though more than once, being still but dust, he fell into crime and committed grievous mistakes; whereas Saul was wrong in public principle—wrong at heart, although his career was not altogether wanting in honorable actions, just sentiments, and heroic deeds. *Kil.*—Saul gives no evidence of having upon and within him the permanent influence of religion, of having anything that we could call the fear and love of God in his heart. David, in spite of his grievous faults, had on his heart and conscience continually the impress of the majesty, the tenderness, the encompassing presence, of God. It is better to have our part with David than with Saul, with a loyalty to God that is not always consistent rather than with an outward propriety that is never really loyal. *Liddon.*

LONG SERVITUDE OF ISRAEL TO THE PHILISTINES.

Verses 19-22.

The only discernible place for this brief narrative in the history seems to be at the very beginning of this chapter. The period of which it speaks must have been during the fifteen or more years of the early reign of Saul, concerning which we have no record. B.—Peace had been purchased for Israel at a heavy price. The oppressor ruled in every village, blew out every forge, carried away every weapon of war, and

plundered the people at his will. Freedom was dead in the Hebrew land. At some previous period the Philistines had entered the country in force, and reduced it to subjection. Their conquest was thorough and lasting, so that the spirit of the Hebrews became broken by years of oppression. These pages of their history, like those of similar periods of bondage in the Book of Judges, are left out of the record; while the story of the deliverance now to come is written at full length, with a pen which seems to betray its joy in almost every word. *Sime.*

14 : 1. In verses 15 and 16 of the previous chapter it appears that Saul and Jonathan with about 600 men had ascended from Gilgal to Geba on the south side of the deep chasm of the Wady Suweinit, while the Philistines encamped in Michmash on the north side, thus reversing the positions held in ch. 13 : 2, 3. B.—In these circumstances it is once more the noble figure of Jonathan which comes to the foreground. Whatever fitness he might have shown for "the kingdom," had he been called to it, a more unselfish, warm-hearted, genuine, or noble character is not presented to us in Scripture than that of Jonathan. Weary of the long and apparently hopeless inactivity, trustful in Jehovah, and fired by the thought that with Him there was "no hindrance to save, by much or by little," he planned single-handed an expedition against the Philistine outpost at Michmash. As he put it, it was emphatically a deed of faith. A. E.

The site of the Philistine camp at Michmash, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer attacked, is very minutely described by Josephus. It was, he says, a precipice with three tops, ending in a long, sharp tongue, and protected by surrounding cliffs. Exactly such a natural fortress exists immediately east of the village of Michmash, and is still called "the fort" by the peasantry. It is a ridge rising in three rounded knolls above a perpendicular crag, ending in a narrow tongue to the east, with cliffs below, and having an open valley behind it, and a saddle toward the west, on which Michmash itself is situate. Opposite this fortress, on the south, there is a crag of equal height, and seemingly impassable. Thus the description of the Old Testament is fully borne out—"a sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other." The southern cliff was called Seneh, or "the acacia," and the same name still applies to the modern valley, due to the acacia-trees which dot its course. The northern cliff was called Bozez, or "shining," and the true explanation of the name only presents itself on the spot. The great valley runs nearly due east, and thus the southern cliff is

THE VALLEY OF MICHMASH (*Wady Suweinit*).

almost entirely in shade during the day. The contrast is surprising and picturesque between the dark cool color of the south side and the ruddy or tawny tints of the northern cliff, crowned with the gleaming white of the upper chalky strata. The picture is unchanged since the days when Jonathan looked over to the white camping-ground of the Philistines, and Bozez must then have shone as brightly as it does now, in the full light of an Eastern sun. Though we got down Seneh, we did not attempt to climb up Bozez. But judging from the descent, it seems possible that Jonathan, with immense labor, could have "climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor-bearer after him." *Conder*.

6. O admirable faith of Jonathan, whom neither the steepness of rocks, nor the multitude of enemies, can dissuade from so unlikely an assault! O Divine power of faith, that in all difficulties and attempts, makes a man more than

men, and regards no more armies of men than swarms of flies! "There is no restraint to the Lord," saith he, "to save with many, or by few." The question is not, what Jonathan can do, but what God can do; whose power is not in the means, but in himself. That man's faith is well underlaid that upholds itself by the omnipotency of God: thus the father of the faithful built his assurance upon the power of the Almighty. *Bp. II.*—It was not Jonathan that was to work with some help from God; it was the Lord that was to work by Jonathan. It was not Jonathan's project that was to be carried out; it was the Lord's cause that was to be advanced. *W. G. B.*

8-10. He put himself upon Providence, and resolved to be determined by it. "We will discover ourselves to the enemy, if they bid us stand, we will advance no further, taking that intimation of Providence that God would have us act defensively; but if they challenge us and

the first sentinel we meet with bids us march on, we will push forward, assuredly gathering that it is the will of God we should act offensively, and he will *stand by us*." Upon this issue he puts it, firmly believing, as we all should, that God has the governing of the hearts and tongues of all men, and serves his own purposes by them, though they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so. Jonathan knew God could discover his mind to him and would do it, since he depended upon him, as surely by the mouth of a Philistine as by the mouth of a priest. God will, some way or other, direct the steps of those that *acknowledge him in all their ways*, and seek unto him for direction, with full purpose of heart to follow his conduct. H.

This open appearance of the Hebrews was as startling as unexpected, nor could the Philistines have imagined that two men alone would challenge a post. With genuine Eastern boastfulness they heaped abuse on them, uttering the challenge to come up. This had been the preconcerted signal; and Jonathan and his armor-bearer crept up the rock on their hands and feet. As Jonathan reached the top, he threw down his foremost opponent, and the armor-bearer, coming up behind, killed him. There was not room for two to attack or defend in line. And so twenty men fell. All this time it would be impossible to know how many assailants were supporting Jonathan and his armor-bearer. This difficulty would be still more felt in the camp and by those at a little farther distance. The terror, probably communicated by fugitives, who would naturally magnify the danger, perhaps into a general assault, soon became a panic. Presently the host became an armed rabble, melting away before their imaginary enemy, and each man's sword in the confusion turned against his neighbor. A. E.

The shaking of the earth, and the shaking of the enemies' host, and the shaking of the Israelite hearts with the thrill of victory, all leaped together. On all sides the Philistines felt themselves surrounded. The Israelites whom they had taken as slaves during the last three days rose in mutiny in the camp. Those who lay hid in the caverns and deep clefts with which the neighborhood abounds, sprang out of their subterraneous dwellings. From the distant height Saul, who had watched the confusion in astonishment, descended headlong and joined in the pursuit. It was a battle that was remembered as reaching clean over the country, from the extreme eastern to the extreme western pass—down the rocky defile of Beth-horon, down into the valley of Aijalon. The victory was so de-

cisive as to give its name, "the war of Michmash," to the whole campaign. The Philistines were driven back not to reappear till the close of the reign. *Stanley*.

23. Beth-aven. Saul crossed the valley from Geba to Michmash, and drove the Philistines back in a northwesterly direction to Beth-aven, half way between Michmash and Bethel. Thence the pursuit was across the watershed, and headlong down the pass of Beth-horon to Aijalon, where the valley begins to open out toward the plain of Philistia:—that same pass where Joshua gained his great victory over the five Amorite kings. The whole distance was between fifteen and twenty miles. A. F. K.

24. All Israel is adjured not to eat any food until the evening. He stops not to reflect that the order he issues defeats the very end he aims at. Not an hour of the day is to be lost, but by denying his fainting soldiers food, they do less instead of more. It is the thoughtless, imperious, arbitrary command of one who cares more for himself than for his men, a command saturated with the spirit of self-idolatry—"That I may be avenged on mine enemies." Is this the end for which the Hebrews are to spill their blood, that he, Saul, may be avenged? Such was the bitter fruit that his being permitted to co-operate with Jehovah bore; and we do not need to have armies at command, or the affairs of a nation to guide, to come under the fatal spell of the spirit that ignores God, and claims for self the credit and the glory which are due alone to Him. *Hanna*.

25-30. However faint, none dared break the fast during that long and weary day, when they followed the enemy as far as the western passes of Aijalon that led down into the Philistine plains. But Jonathan had not known it, till one told him of his father's vow after he had paused in the forest to dip his staff into honey that had dropped from the combs of wild bees. For such an offence Jonathan was certainly not morally responsible. Considering how small an amount of nourishment had helped him in his weariness, he could only deplore the rashness of his father, whose vow had, through the faintness which it entailed on the people, defeated the very object he had sought. A. E.

32-35. The first fatal mischief that Saul's rash order wrought, was to involve the people in a breach of the ceremonial law. Denied all food for a whole day, when evening comes, so ravenous is their appetite that they cannot wait till the animals they kill are thoroughly drained of their blood, and so they violate the Mosaic precept which forbade the blood to be eaten.

Saul was even moved to take upon him the new character of a religious instructor of the people. "Ye have transgressed," he said to them. "Sin not against the Lord in eating with blood." He had a stone rolled to him, on which the animals might be so slaughtered as to take out all the blood. He built an altar on which burnt-offerings might be presented for the putting away of the great public guilt that had been contracted. That, we are particularly informed, was the first altar that he built unto the Lord. No altar at Mizpah for the acknowledgment of God in entering upon his first campaign—no altar at Gilgal, upon which there might be confession of the guilt contracted there—no altar even at Michmash, to render thank-offerings for the wonderful deliverance vouchsafed to Israel—no altar any time or anywhere, till this particular offence of eating blood was committed. *Hanna.*—That it should never have entered his mind to build an altar to God before, this was the point on which the Spirit of God directed that the sacred historian should pronounce emphatically. How keenly significant is that parenthetical sentence: "The same was the first altar which he built to the Lord!"

39. In the right direction of the lots as they were cast, it was the evident design of God to bring out to view the evil of Saul's inconsiderateness. He was the only culpable person, and God made that fact evident. Now, one would have thought that if anything could have brought him to a sense of his error, it would have been the discovery that his rash decree and oath had implicated his own son Jonathan in liability to suffering and death. But no! he did not see it;

he would not see it. Our indignation rises when we hear him say, "God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan;" and we are ready to exclaim, "What! another oath? Has not one done mischief enough? cannot you see it? do you not feel it?" Nothing can exceed the hardening influence of that professed religion which leaves a man unsuspecting and ignorant of himself. *Newman.*

44, 45. If Jonathan had not found better friends than his father, so noble a victory had been recompensed with death. He, that saved Israel from the Philistines, is saved by Israel from the hand of his father. *Bp. H.*—With generous enthusiasm they cried, "God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." These remarkable words should be meditated upon in connection with those addressed by Jonathan himself that morning to his armor-bearer, "It may be the Lord will work for us." The Lord did work for him; and truly he wrought with God. It was a great day for Israel, and from the beginning to the end Jonathan was the hero of that day. *Kil.*

So the Lord saved Israel that day. And thus the faith of Jonathan had a glorious reward. The inspiration of faith vindicated itself, and the noble self-devotion that had plunged into this otherwise desperate enterprise, because there was no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few, led thus to a triumph more speedy and more complete than even Jonathan could have ventured to dream of. *W. G. B.*

Section 240.

COMMISSION TO DESTROY AMALEK. SAUL'S SECOND DISOBEDIENCE. FINAL REJECTION. SAMUEL SLAYS AGAG.

1 SAMUEL 14 : 47-52 ; 15 : 1-35.

14 47-52. *Summary account of Saul's wars and of his family.*

15 1 And Samuel said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4 And Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

Verse 6. The Kenites spared.

- 7 And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt.
 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with
 9 the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and
 of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly
 destroy them : but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.
- 10, 11 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up
 Saul to be king : for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my com-
 12 mandments. And Samuel was wroth ; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And Samuel
 rose early to meet Saul in the morning ; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel,
 and, behold, he set him up a monument, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to
 13 Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul : and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD : I
 14 have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this
 15 bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear ? And Saul said.
 They have brought them from the Amalekites : for the people spared the best of the sheep and
 16 of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God ; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then
 Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night.
 17 And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight,
 18 wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel ? And the LORD anointed thee king over
 Israel ; and the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the
 19 Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not
 obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the
 20 sight of the LORD ? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD,
 and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek,
 21 and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen,
 22 the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel
 said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice
 of the LORD ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.
 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Be-
 cause thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.
 24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned : for I have transgressed the commandment of the
 25 LORD, and thy words : because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I
 26 pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And
 Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee : for thou hast rejected the word of the
 27 LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned
 28 about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent. And Samuel said unto
 him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neigh-
 29 bor of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor re-
 30 pent : for he is not a man, that he should repent. Then he said, I have sinned : yet honor
 me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with
 31 me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul ; and Saul
 worshipped the LORD.
- 32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came
 33 unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel
 said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.
 And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.
- 34, 35 Then Samuel went to Ramah ; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And
 Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death ; for Samuel mourned for Saul :
 and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

47. The various wars undertaken by Saul whom the people elected king "to go out before them and fight their battles" are here summarily noticed. A. F. K.—These expeditions are only indicated in the sacred text, as not forming constituent elements in the history of the kingdom of God, however they may have contributed to the prosperity of the Jewish state. The war against Amalek alone is separately told (ch. 15), alike from its character and from its bearing on the kingdom which God would establish in Israel. 49-51. Along with these outward successes the sacred text also indicates the seeming prosperity of Saul, as re-

garded his family-life. It almost appears as if it had been intended to place before us, side by side in sharp contrast, these two facts : Saul's prosperity both at home and abroad, and his sudden fall and rejection, to show forth that grand truth which all history is evolving : Jehovah reigneth ! A. E.

Some years had passed during which Saul had distinguished himself in the field by a series of always successful operations against the hostile nations around, whom he taught to respect the power of Israel, though he did not bring them under subjection. It would appear that in all these proceedings he acted much as an independent sovereign, without the required indications of his dependence upon the Divine King of Israel. One trial more was to be afforded him—one more test of his obedience, before the sentence of exclusion from his dynasty was finally pronounced. *Kit.*

Special Commission to Destroy Amalek.

15 : 1-3.

1. Me did Jehovah send. The pronoun stands emphatically at the head of the sentence. The prophet appeals to his former commission to anoint Saul as accrediting him to be God's messenger on the present occasion. "The note of special warning" with which he prefaces the command indicates that he felt that "the discipline of Saul's life was gathering itself up into a special trial," and that this would be "a crisis in that life-history." A. F. K.

15 : 1. Already Saul had openly violated the fundamental principles of the constitution on which he held the throne, and the prophet had announced its forfeiture. Still this forfeiture was not carried into immediate execution. Time and opportunity were given him to retrace his steps ; nay, more,—and this gives its chief interest to this narrative—God spontaneously puts him afresh on trial, proposes to him a new test of obedience. Samuel comes to Saul, comes of his own accord, with a proposal emanating immediately from the Most High, commissioning the king to go and execute on Amalek the doom pronounced many hundred years before. A man of a right spirit, in Saul's place, would have accepted this commission with joy. It carried with it no indistinct indication that he had not utterly been cast out of the Divine favor. It gave him a renewed opportunity of proving his fidelity to the crown, and regaining the place from which he had fallen. Without reproaching him for the past, how tenderly does Samuel remind him of it, and how earnestly does he

plead with him to be faithful to the new trust committed to him. *Hanna.*

3. This sin of Amalek slept all the time of the Judges, who were only for rescue and defence ; now, so soon as Israel hath a king and that king is settled in peace, God gives charge to call them to account. It was that which God had both threatened and sworn ; and now he chooses out a fit season for the execution. *Bp. H.*

8, 9. Agag, the king, was taken prisoner ; but all the rest of the people were put to death, clearly showing that Saul was not moved to disobedience by any feelings of humanity. There can be no doubt that Agag was spared to add splendor to Saul's triumphant return, as a king making war for himself rather than as the servant of Jehovah. The spoil was dealt with in like manner ; and here the people shared the sin, sparing all the best of the cattle and all that was valuable, and destroying all that was vile and refuse. It was doubtless true in part, as Saul afterward declared, that he would have offered some of the cattle in sacrifice to God ; but the chief motive in sparing them was clearly to enrich his followers with the spoil. Instead of pursuing the campaign and finishing the destruction of the fugitives, he returned by way of Carmel to Gilgal (verse 12). *P. S.*

10, 11. What now follows in the sacred narrative is tragic, grand, and even awful. The first scene is laid at night in Samuel's house at Ramah. It is God who speaketh to the aged seer. "It repenteth Me that I have made Saul king, for he has returned from after Me, and My Word he has not executed" (literally, set up). "And it kindled in Samuel" (intense feeling), "and he cried unto Jehovah the whole night." A. E.—Without ceasing, the man of prayer fought all that night for the soldier. Connected with him by no tie of kindred, Samuel appears in this pleading for the fallen king as one who was girt about with the moral greatness of a loving heart. But his prayers could not change the purposes of Almighty wisdom. *Sime.*—**12.** With the morning light came calm resolve and the terrible duty of going in search of Saul on this errand of God. A. E.

The vain-glorious character of Saul was further evinced in his homeward march, by his setting up a monument of his exploit at Carmel (south of Hebron)—thus appropriating to himself all the honor of the success, and such as no other king ever ventured to do. Compare the spirit which this evinces with the constant and heart-felt dependence upon God, and the formal ascription of all honor and glory to Him.

evinced in the Psalms and the history of David—a far greater conqueror than Saul. *Kit.*

13. *Saul's greeting to Samuel.* God had said to the Prophet, *Saul hath not performed my commandment.* In bold denial now sounds the assertion of Saul, *I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* He is forward, too, in making a profession of obedience before he is inquired of by Samuel. This assertion of itself, where no challenge of innocence is uttered, indicates sensitiveness of conscience and consciousness of guilt. B.—His heart knew that his tongue was as false as his hands had been; and if his heart had not been more false than either of them, neither of them had been so gross in their falsehood. If hypocrisy were not either foolish or impudent, she durst not show her head to a seer of God. *Bp. H.*

14, 15. Samuel first disproves Saul's assertion by the evidence of his senses, and speaking only for himself. The bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen testified loudly against the king. The fact he cannot deny, and therefore he undertakes to justify it. He puts the responsibility upon *the people*; an unworthy subterfuge, showing that his character, both as king and man, was utterly demoralized. Then, as a color of excuse for *their* act, he affirms that *the best of the sheep and oxen were spared for sacrifice.* But, he adds, virtually repeating his first assertion of obedience for himself and the people, "*the rest we have utterly destroyed.*" The answer was deceitful and false at every point. He knew that the people would not have dared to spare without *his* assent, and that he *had* assented to it; that both he and the people sought their own advantage in sparing the cattle; and that, even if they had intended to offer them in sacrifice, the offerings would be appropriated to sacrificial meals, and so be used for their own gratification. And he should have inferred that God would not accept for sacrifice at the altar the cattle which He had distinctly commanded to be sacrificed to Him in the field. Often and plainly before, he had been told that God could be served, and would be worshipped, only in the way He had himself prescribed. His whole plea, therefore, was utterly false and hypocritical.

16, 17, 18, 19. *Samuel charges guilt home upon Saul.* He speaks now expressly in God's name, faithfully uttering the message of Jehovah in part. He reminds Saul of his obscure origin, and the honor God had put upon him in exalting him to be king over Israel; recalls the distinctness of the Divine command he was bidden to execute in destroying the enemies of

God and of Israel; refers to the ease of the service and the certainty of his success, since it was *a journey upon which he was sent* rather than a war to be waged at his own charges. Thus he emphasizes the terrible charge with which he concludes, that Saul had *disobeyed the voice of the Lord, and done evil in his sight*, by selfishly converting to his own use that which was to have been destroyed for the honor of God.

20, 21. *Saul boldly denies the charge.* First, with a defiant spirit, he reasserts his entire obedience to God's command, and then again shifts the responsibility for the sparing of the cattle from himself to the people, repeating the attempt to justify their act, by their purpose to offer the animals in sacrifice to God. He admits that he spared the King Agag, but affirms that he had destroyed all the people of Amalek, and that he held the king a prisoner. In all this reply he does but confirm the Prophet's charge. He spared the king to grace his own triumph, and the cattle to enrich himself and his people. B.—If Saul's intention of sacrifice had been true, it had been frivolous, for God hates robbery for burnt-offering; God appointed these cattle to be sacrificed to him in the field, and therefore will give to those no thanks that bring them to be sacrificed at his altar; for he will be served in his own way, and according to the rule he himself has prescribed. *H.*

What was already devoted to the Lord could not be offered to Him on the altar, because it belonged to Him already, but must be burnt together with the city to which it belonged, "*in the midst of the street thereof*" (De. 12 : 16). This base paltering with truth, this pretext of piety to excuse wilful disobedience, awakened the true prophetic spirit in Samuel's breast, and, rapt beyond himself by the inspiration of the Most High, he poured forth in winged words the eternal truth which lies at the foundation of all religious service, the inferior worth of ceremonial to moral obedience, so far in anticipation of any teaching yet given. E. V.—With a burst of prophetic inspiration Samuel rends asunder Saul's tissue of excuses, and lays bare his sin. His words are the key-note of the long remonstrance of the prophets in subsequent ages against the too common error of supposing that external ceremonial can be of any value in the sight of God when separated from the true devotion of the worshipper's heart which it symbolizes. A. F. K.

If the sacred writer had not recorded the tenderness of Samuel in crying to Jehovah all night for the king, a reader might think every gentle

feeling was dead in the prophet's bosom. But the sternness of Samuel goes hand-in-hand with his tenderness. And when these two feelings invite our judgment on the part he bore in this interview, there is but one thing to be said: while the prophet loved Saul much, he loved Jehovah more. Because he loved Saul much, he cried to God all night, striving to turn aside the sword of justice. When he failed, the greater love which he bore to Jehovah came into play. *Sime.*

22, 23. *The Prophet defines the sin, and pronounces the doom of Saul.* In words so vivid, piercing, stern, that they seem to kindle into flame upon the page, he refutes Saul's justification, defines the character and shows the enormity of his guilt, and concentrates the accusation in the very announcement of God's sentence of final rejection. First he appeals to Saul's own instructed conscience as against even the excuse he had offered. Compared with obedience to God, did not Saul himself know that burnt-offering was an abomination, and sacrifice a mockery in His sight? And still referring to the comparison of outward worship and heart obedience, he concentrates the charge against the king by sharply affirming that *rebelliousness* or *stubbornness*—i.e., self-willed disobedience, is like in character and guilt to a rejection of Jehovah, a turning away from true heart worship to the impostures of witchcraft, or the iniquities of idol-worship. Then follows the sentence of doom: *Because thou hast despised, made nothing of, the word or commandment of the Lord, therefore he has despised, made nothing of thee, and cast thee down from being king.* Few words of the Old Testament are so instructive. That obedience is better than sacrifice, is evident from the character and cost of each. "In sacrifice a man offers only the strange flesh of irrational animals, whereas in obedience he offers his own will, which is rational or spiritual worship." And the cost of bringing a lamb or heifer to the altar is not comparable with that of bringing every high thought and selfish passion as a sacrifice of obedience to God. Moreover, sacrifice itself finds meaning and value only as in outward form it expresses the fact of inward penitence, submission and trust. It is in these the penitent Psalmist finds the sacrifices of God to consist. Specially instructive also are these words of Samuel, occurring at this early period in Israel's history, and followed by many of like import, as showing that the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law was taught to and understood by the people. B.

Above all merely formal acts of worship,

though they be acts that God himself has prescribed, above all sacrifices, whether of the lamb of the fold or the gold of the coffer, precious, in God's reckoning, is the ear that is open to hear His word, and the hand that is ready to do His bidding. And for the constant hearkening to His voice, and the constant doing of His will, He will accept no substitute in the costliest offerings that we may present. It is sad to reflect how much of the religion that exists among us is a religion of substitution and compromise. Some of the costliest things we have we would offer Him. No small portion of our time we would dedicate to His worship and service. No small portion of our wealth we would contribute for the extension of His kingdom. Many a painful duty will we do, many a painful sacrifice will we make; but all for this, that having given so much to God, the rest may be our own to do with as we please, to spend as we may list. It cannot be. The Holy One and the Just will enter into no such compromise, will stoop to no such terms. It is a broad, unrestricted obedience that He claims; a willing, loving, universal service. He asks the heart—the whole heart; the life—the whole life. For the habitual neglect of any one known duty, for the habitual commission of any one known sin, no compensation can be accepted. And there is something singularly impressive in this testimony to the comparative worthlessness of all sacrifices and burnt-offerings issuing from the very heart of the Levitical institute, spoken at the very time when all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord touching the manifold services of the sanctuary were in full force. To bear this very testimony in front of the priesthood, was, in truth, one of the chief designs of the Prophetic office. And it is with no stinted breath that the first in the line of this order sounds here the key-note, responded to by one after another of his successors, till Jeremiah is bold enough to say, in the name of the Lord, "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Jer. 7: 22, 23). *Hinna.*

24, 25. Driven from evasion to evasion, he could no longer dissemble his guilt, but was constrained to confess that he had feared the people instead of God, had obeyed their voice instead of the voice of God. The extreme solicitude with which, after his confession, he importuned Samuel to turn with him and honor him before the elders of the people, showed that

the respect of men was still the darling object of his heart. *Gisborne.*

David, during his reign, committed a more heinous offence against domestic and social morality than anything that Saul as yet had done; but he was pardoned and restored because when charged with the sin—"Thou art the man"—he confessed it, and excused not himself. And then he cried to God, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." But Saul, when charged with disobedience, showed no shame or sorrow on its account. He at once put himself in a defensive attitude, stooped to subterfuge, laid the blame on others, had no feeling but a desire to escape consequences. It is pitiful to see that the king looked no higher than to Samuel, and asked no more than that the prophet would pardon him, and favor him so far as to join with him while he publicly worshipped the Lord. D. F.

27-31. He entreated him to go with him, and when Samuel refused, and turned to leave, he laid such hold on the corner of his mantle that he rent it. Not terrified by the violence of the king, Samuel only bade him consider this as a sign of how Jehovah had that day rent the kingdom from him. At last the painful scene ended. Saul gave up the pretence of wishing Samuel's presence from religious motives, and pleaded for it on the ground of honoring him before the elders of his people. And to this Samuel yielded. A. E.—The abject wretchedness of the man seems to have touched him. But it is not said that Samuel worshipped with him. Samuel would no doubt continue firm to his purpose not to identify himself with Saul as king, or give him any moral support in his attitude of disobedience. **32, 33.** So far from that, Samuel openly superseded him in dealing with Agag; he went out of his way, and did an act which could not but appear a frightful one for a venerable prophet of the Lord. It is the voice of the real king that sounds in the command, "Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." W. G. B.

Rising to the stern demands of God's fearful retributions, Samuel declares to Agag, "As thy sword has made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women," and then "hewed the guilty king in pieces before the Lord"—the final clause "*before the Lord*" signifying that God was solemnly present to that scene, and that it was done in faithful though stern fulfilment of God's command. It was the moment for God's eternal justice to be vindicated. There was no element in Saul's character equal to such an emergency; there was none in Samuel's that could shrink from fulfilling God's

high behest. The contrast is a lesson in moral sublimity. H. C.

Far higher than feelings of humanity, there may be, though unknown to us, a justice requiring the infliction of a punishment, which our pity shrinks from as harsh or terrible. Pity is not allowed to interfere with justice when a traitor, or a spy, or a murderer meets his fate. But an all-knowing judge may treat nations and races precisely as men treat their fellows who have been guilty of crime. This is the position taken by Hebrew historians. It is a reasonable position; one, too, which can be defended and vindicated on principles of the highest morality. As a man is to his fellow-men for reward or punishment, so may a nation be to God. There are no other grounds on which the morality of Amalek's destruction can be placed. *Sime.*—It is one of the sublime prerogatives of the God of nations to hold men to righteousness and to deter them from outrageous inhumanity. There will be cases that must be made terrible examples of the punishment which such sinners deserve. The assumption—sometimes so hastily and thoughtlessly made—that real benevolence never can restrain sin by means of inflicted suffering, may sometimes seem plausible, but is sadly short-sighted, not to say puerile. It has never measured the mischiefs of unrestrained sin in the moral universe; has taken no account of the true interests of moral beings, or of the value of holiness; and does not even attempt to estimate the responsibilities of the Great Father of all to restrain and punish the free moral wickedness of his creatures. H. C.

35. From that day forward Samuel came no more to see Saul. God's ambassador was no longer accredited to him. The Spirit of Jehovah departed from him. But still Samuel mourned for him and over him; mourned as for one cut off in the midst of life, dead while living, a king rejected of God. And still "Jehovah repented that He had made Saul king over Israel." A. E.

The rejection of Saul took no sudden effect. Gravely and sadly it was pronounced by Samuel; but it brought about no immediate catastrophe. None the less was it a sure and fatal sentence. We know that Saul was not dethroned. He had a long reign, and died on the battle-field. But the process was already begun which led him to dark Gilboa, which led one better than him to Hebron and to Jerusalem; and the remainder of this book is occupied in showing how the Divine rejection of Saul took effect, and how the Lord brought forward and trained the son of Jesse for the kingdom. D. F.

Section 241.

DAVID ANOINTED BY SAMUEL. SAUL TROUBLED BY AN EVIL SPIRIT. SOOTHED BY DAVID'S HARP.

1 SAMUEL 16 : 1-23.

16 1 AND the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to 2 Jesse the Beth lehemite : for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, 3 and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew 4 thee what thou shalt do : and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the city 5 came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably : I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD : sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. 6 And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before 7 him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature ; because I have rejected him : for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth ; for man looketh 8 on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, 9 and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then 10 Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD 11 hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto 12 Jesse, Send and fetch him : for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look 13 upon. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren : and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD 15 troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God 16 troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp : and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit 17 from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul 18 said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in 19 speech, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers 20 unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. 21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him : and he loved him greatly ; and he became 22 his armor-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me ; 23 for he hath found favor in my sight. And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

From this point onward, the historic thread runs on the life of David, not of Saul. David is the primary character, Saul only the secondary. Whatever is said of Saul is here because of its relations to David. H. C.

Good Samuel mourned for him that had not grace to mourn for himself. It grieved him to

see the plant, which he had set in the garden of Israel, thus soon withered. God did not blame this sorrow, but moderated it ; " How long wilt thou mourn for Saul ? " It was not the affection he forbade, but the measure. In this is the difference betwixt good men and evil, that evil men mourn not for their own sins, good men do

so mourn for the sins of others that they will hardly be taken off. *Bp. H.*—This personal sorrow of Samuel shows a man's heart in the Prophet, as the very terms of God's address, so like to human, show His thorough appreciation of genuine feeling in a true man. And God *reasons* with this grief while gently reproving it—"seeing I have rejected him." The command to go forth and execute his office, is God's further remedy to counteract the grief of Samuel, and to carry out His own purposes. *B.*

The character of Samuel is, in every stage of his career, one of the grandest in the Old Testament. The exquisite beauty of his holy childhood; the vigor and wisdom of his administration as judge; the calm dignity with which he yields to the demands of the people, and bows to what he feels to be the Divine will; the energy with which he throws himself into the new system, alien as it was to his own personal feelings and cherished convictions; his warmth of affection for the youthful monarch who had supplanted him in the popular favor; the depth of his sorrow at the repeated failure of the chosen one whom he had been the instrument of raising to his high office; the reluctance with which he regards the breach as final, and seals Saul's rejection by anointing a successor; all combine to make up a portrait on which the mind rests with unqualified admiration. *E. V.*

2. God orders him to cover his design with a sacrifice. Say, *I am come to sacrifice*; and it was true he did, and it was proper that he should, when he came to anoint a king. As a prophet, he might sacrifice when and where God appointed him; and it was not at all inconsistent with the laws of truth to say he came to sacrifice, when really he did so, though he had also a further end, which he thought fit to conceal. *H.*—Manifestly Samuel was not actuated by fear, as all his previous words and acts in Saul's presence abundantly show, and as there is no reproof of such fear in God's answer. He was stating a *fact*. Saul had already become a subject of that frenzy from the control of "an evil spirit" of which we read so much afterward, and Samuel simply stated what he had reason to know, that Saul would kill him if he learned of this errand. And naturally he asked "*how*" he could go without encountering this peril. And to the fact and question so stated, the Divine answer corresponds. Go and sacrifice! There was no pretence thought of, much less any attempt at deceit. It was Samuel's well-known office, as the Prophet of Israel, to offer sacrifice when and where he might be directed of God. It was God's purpose that was to be

carried out in the mere anointing of David now. It was *not* God's purpose to supplant Saul, nor did he design that this act of Samuel should set up a rival king, and stir up civil war. Therefore the transaction must be secret—hidden entirely from Saul. For this reason Samuel is bidden simply to conceal it, not to enact any duplicity or falsehood in what he did. *B.*—The principle, of course, can only be applied to those cases where we have a right to conceal; but all partial and evasive answers when we are bound to speak the whole truth, or when they are given for the purpose of deception, are inconsistent with veracity. Then a man does not *hide*, but *lie*. *Thornwell.*

3. *The specific direction to call Jesse to the sacrifice, and to anoint one that God would name.* Jesse was the head of a family that had been distinguished as Bethlehemites for several generations. Himself and his sons were to be summoned to attend the social feast that immediately followed the offering of sacrifice. In all minor particulars God promises to disclose at the time all that Samuel should do, only instructing him to anoint the person He should then designate.

4, 5. *Samuel's prompt obedience, and his reception at Bethlehem.* He "did that which the Lord spake." Between five and six miles south of Jerusalem stood (and still stands) the little town so noted in Old and New Testament history, whose adjoining hill-side slope is especially and forever memorable as the scene of that transcendent vision and song of the angelic host at the birth of Christ. *B.*—As we follow Samuel to Bethlehem, we seem to mark the same primitive simplicity and life of piety as of old. When the "elders" hear of Samuel's coming, they go to meet him, yet with fear lest the unexpected visit betoken some unknown sin resting on their quiet village. This apprehension is removed by Samuel's explanation, and they are invited to attend the "sacrifice." But the sacrificial meal which usually followed was to be confined to Jesse and his family, in whose house, as we infer, Samuel was a welcome guest. *A. E.*

6, 7. *Samuel's mistaken judgment, and its instant correction by the Lord.* When he looked on the stately appearance of Jesse's first-born son, in his own unguided thought, prophet as he was, he too hastily judged as any other man would judge, and said within himself, Surely this is the Lord's anointed. But the Lord answered his thought by the refusal of Eliab, and instructed him in the grand principle of the Divine judgment concerning men, and the only basis of the Divine dealings with men. God's choice of men is based upon the quality of the

heart ; while man's choice rests upon what *he* counts most desirable, upon personal grace or mental gifts, or a seemingly fair demeanor and conduct. Not the outward appearance or conduct, which man beholds, but the disposition of the heart, which God only can discern, reveals the true character of the man, and determines the dealing of God with men. Not what a man *appears* to be in outward form and demeanor, or even in external acting, but "as a man *thinketh in his heart*, that is he." And God's true judgment goes with his searching vision, to every heart of man. B.

Israel's second king was to be chosen on the ground of qualities pleasing to God, and not of those that were popular with men. In the case of the first king the people had a man to their notion—of tall and commanding presence, who in these points might compare with the champion monarchs of the nations round about them. In the case of David the Lord sought and found a man whose chief qualities were that he knew and loved the Lord, and that his heart was true and trustful toward the God of Israel. H. C.

8, 9, 10. *Six other sons of Jesse refused.* As one after another passed before the instructed Prophet, he kept back his own thought, waiting and looking for the Divine direction and choice. And herein, this noble and comparatively stainless Judge of Israel, crowning and completing many previous similar instances in his history, forcibly commends the cardinal duty of obedience, even as Saul, by contrast, in all the marked actions of his life, emphasizes the evil—the sin and the wretchedness—of disobedience.

11, 12. *The eighth and youngest sent for, and brought from the field.* Not from any lack of affection or appreciation on his father's part was David set to the care of the sheep, but simply because he was the *youngest* son. The active toil of life was assigned to the others. At Samuel's direction, Jesse sent a messenger for David, and afterward presented his youthful son to the prophet. And this fair youth, with his fairer temper and noble qualities of character, least thought of by his father and brethren because of his immature age, was the choice of God. As in so many instances in the inspired history, nay, rather as in every instance of God's choice of men to do his work, the younger, the feebler, the least noticeable is preferred, and preferred on account of recognized fitness of disposition and character for the accomplishment of his special purposes. Thus it was pre-eminently with this appointment. The son of Jesse proved to be "a man after God's own

heart." B.—David was a man after the Lord's heart in loyally doing his will. He was not without fault ; he certainly displeased God more than once ; but he thoroughly apprehended what Saul never could understand—that a king of Israel should without question or murmur carry out the paramount will of God. In this respect David never failed. He had many trials and temptations, afflictions that might have made him discontented, and successes that might have made him proud ; but he continued steadfast in his purpose of heart to be the Lord's, to consult the Lord about everything, and carry out his revealed will. D. F.

13. In silence, as it would seem, Samuel anointed him. Whether the secret of his high destiny was imparted to him then, or left to be disclosed in future years, is not told. But at all events, whether with full understanding of what was before him or no, he must have been conscious of a call that would carry him far away from the pastures and olive yards of the little hamlet, and of a new Spirit stirring in him from that day forward. A. M.

In the midst of his brethren. It should have been translated, *from the midst of his brethren* ; that is, he singled him out from the rest and privately anointed him. For it is manifest that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publicly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David after this, it plainly enough appears that he did not know him to be the king elect of God's people. *Patrick.*—It is little likely that Samuel, who anointed Saul secretly when there was no direct danger to apprehend, should have anointed David in the presence of several persons when there was much to be apprehended from the wrath of Saul. There were those at Saul's court who were well acquainted with David and his family, yet no one seems to have been aware of the fact of this anointing. The conviction that David was the man appointed to succeed him, seems to have gradually dawned upon the mind of Saul from circumstances, and to have been confirmed beyond question when David eventually fled to Samuel. *Kit.*

The ancestral "root" of Christ, David stands as the most signal character of the Old Testament history. No one is so personally and closely associated with Christ ; none is so typical of Christ in his highest relations. With David God made special covenant. His name and his dominion, also many particulars of his personal history, are so closely interwoven by psalmists and prophets with the history and

reign of the predicted Messiah, that the Jewish people came to characterize the coming Deliverer as the Son of David—a title and relationship recognized by Christ himself in his own words, and afterward, through John, in the Apocalypse. To this signal character, to these sublime relations, David was now anointed, solemnly set apart by the Divine command in the anointing act of Samuel. Not only his choice and consecration by Jehovah, but his name, his kingship, his inspired words and acts, all have reference to the lofty place assigned him in the history of human redemption. B.

The sacrifice past, and the sacrificial meal over, Samuel returned to Ramah, and David to his humble avocation in his father's household. And here also we love to mark the print of our Lord's footsteps, and to see in the history of David the same submission to a lowly calling; and the same subjectness to his parents, as we adoringly trace in the life of Him who humbled himself to become David's son. But there was henceforth one difference in the life of the son of Jesse. From the day of his anointing forward, "the Spirit of Jehovah seized upon David," as formerly upon Saul, to qualify him by might and by power for the work of "God's anointed." A. E.—He was endued with courage, resolution, and prudence to fit him for the events which awaited him, and for the government of God's people, whenever he should be promoted to that dignity. Chandler.—"From that day forward" David entered upon a new stage in the development of his inner life, which was wholly consecrated to God. The rich talents wherewith he was endowed from his birth received on all sides fresh unfolding. The holy record of the Books of Moses, in which he had been instructed from his earliest years, was opened to his enlightened eye more and more. The peaceful stillness of nature amid which, tending his father's flocks, he spent his days, and often also the mild, starry nights, favored his penetration into the secrets of the Divine revelation. His heart, moved and directed from above, already poured itself out in sacred song and poem, which he sang to the accompaniment of his harp, to the praise of that God before whom from his childhood he had learned to bow the knee. Krummacher.

14. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. This Spirit is represented as a *power proceeding from Jehovah,—a something communicated by Him*, which clings to the person to whom it is communicated, so that it may be apportioned from him to others (Nu. 11 : 17, 25 ; 2 K. 2 : 9), but it can also be taken away

from him, as here from Saul. A full *indwelling* of the Spirit in man, a penetration of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit, is not reached in the Old Testament, but only a working on the human mind. Though we must not read the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity into the Old Testament, it is yet undeniable that we find the way to the economic Trinity of the New Testament already prepared in the doctrine of the Malakh and of the Spirit. O.

An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. An evil spirit, by permission of God, troubled him, by causing in him or putting into his mind, suspicious, timorous, envious, and melancholy thoughts. Wells.—The remorse of his conscience, the menaces of Samuel, God's rejection of him, and his continual apprehensions of being dethroned by his competitor, exasperated his natural temper, generated a melancholy habit of mind, and carried him by fits into actual madness. Stackhouse.—That dark heart was haunted by the gloomy delusions which usher in despair. Reason trembled on her seat of rule, while passion and hatred led madness on, and seated her instead upon that throne of inward mystery. For years the awful conflict lasted ; gleams of light there were, but ever more the darkness deepened, and its evil, half-discerned figures thronged him in wilder and denser companionship, and gathered closer around him. Wilberforce.—It only remains to say that there is need of no other agency from God than the permissive. What can be said against his wisdom or his love in leaving sinners to their own chosen ways ? What reason can be given why he should not thus leave them ? How can sin be more effectually forestalled and resisted in a moral universe than by sometimes giving it scope to develop its full and fearful power to sink human souls under an unutterable desolation ? H. C.

There is a deeply instructive but awful pathos in this inspired statement, joined so closely as it is with that which precedes. Read them together : "*The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.*" Fearful indeed the lesson of Saul's after life ! A king, unshorn of earthly power and possession, having everything that man could have, yet living consciously under doom, knowing and feeling a blight upon all his seeming prosperity and enjoyment, with the conviction seated immovably in his soul that his own foolish self-indulgence, his wilful disobedience, had already wrought his utter and irretrievable ruin. These contrasted statements

show that there is an abiding of the Spirit of God with the obedient trusting soul, which makes the heart peaceful and the life blessed and useful. And there is a grieving and quenching of the Spirit of God by wilful disobedience, and a final departure of the Spirit which leaves the soul forevermore a prey to the evil spirit, and a subject of unmitigated and unending anguish. Either God and His grace, or Satan and his malignity, must rule in every heart. Ours is the choice, and ours now the opportunity of wise and happy choice. And ours the responsibility of the final changeless result! B.

17-21. This reference to the evil spirit upon Saul appears here to account for David's coming to court. He was brought there to relieve Saul in his paroxysms of melancholic insanity. David (as appears here) had other fine and promising qualities besides his skill in music—a mighty, valiant man, a man of war, of knowledge and skill *in words* (so the Hebrew); of agreeable person, and, as was well understood, a man who walked with God, and whose ways

the Lord made to prosper. Hence, even Saul was favorably impressed, and, as the record puts it—"loved him greatly." H. C.

23. It is said that the evil spirit departed, but not that the good spirit returned. Saul's trouble was alleviated, but not removed. The disease was still here. The results of David's harp were negative and superficial. So there are many outward applications which soothe and calm and please, but that is all; they do not go below the surface, nor touch the deep seated malady within. Our age is full of such appliances, all got up for the purpose of soothing the troubled spirits of men. *H. Bonar.*—But they cannot pluck out the vexing memory that has rooted itself in the very depths of the soul. The harp of David could make Saul occasionally forget, could wile him away from himself for a few moments; but it did not, could not effectively and permanently allay the inward sorrow, or chase the dark spirit away. It could charm into momentary forgetfulness, but it had no spell to break the link that bound the monarch to his fate. *Hanna.*

Section 242.

DAVID AND GOLIATH. JONATHAN AND DAVID.

1 SAMUEL 17 : 1-58 ; 18 : 1-5.

Verses 4-21. Description of Goliath, and his challenge to the armies of Israel. David sent by Jesse to carry provisions to his three eldest brethren.

17 1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Socoh and Azekah, in
2 Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched in the
3 vale of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there
22 was a valley between them. And David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the
23 baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.
24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.
25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great
26 riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised
27 Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

Verses 28-30. Eliab's scornful words and David's quiet reply.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul;
32 and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy
33 servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war
34 from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and when

35 there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth : and when he arose against me, I caught him by his
 36 beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear : and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the
 37 living God. And David said, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said
 38 unto David, Go, and the LORD shall be with thee. And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David
 39 girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go ; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved them. And David put them off
 40 him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip ; and his sling was in his
 41 hand : and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David ; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked
 42 about, and saw David, he disdained him : for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me
 43 with staves ? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the
 44 field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin : but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies
 45 of Israel, which thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from off thee ; and I will give the carcasses of the host of
 46 the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth ; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel : and that all this assembly may know that
 47 the LORD saveth not with sword and spear : for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to
 48 meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his
 49 forehead ; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine,
 50 and slew him ; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they
 51 fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell
 52 down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ; but he put his armor in his tent.
 53 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth ? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I
 54 cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou
 55 young man ? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.
 18 1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his
 2 sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely : and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

ON THE TEXT OF CHAPS. 17 AND 18.

The Septuagint Version in its oldest form as preserved in the Vatican ms. (B) differs consid-

erably from the present Hebrew text in chaps. 17 and 18. It does not contain the following passages : 17 : 12-31, 41, 48 (partly), 50, 55-58 ; 18 : 1-5, and the greater part of 6, 9-11, 17-19,

29 b, 30. There are besides a few minor variations. Some of these passages are wanting in a few other mss. beside B : in the Alexandrine (A) and most other mss. they have been inserted : but it is clear that at least 17 : 12-31 was not in the archetype from which A was copied, and the style of the version proves conclusively that it is no part of the original Septuagint, but derived from some other source, perhaps the version of Theodotion, which was executed in the second century A.D. The result of these omissions is a straightforward and consistent narrative free from the difficulties of the Hebrew text. David, in virtue of his appointment as armor-bearer (16 : 21), has accompanied Saul into the valley of Elah ; he challenges and slays Goliath, and on his return at the close of the campaign is welcomed by the songs of the women of Israel : by his further military successes he wins the affections of the people and the love of Michal. Three stages in the development of Saul's enmity are clearly marked : (a) 18 : 12 "he was afraid of him ;" (b) verse 15, "he stood in awe of him," and endeavored indirectly to get rid of him ; (c) verse 29, 19 : 1, "he was yet more afraid of David," and gave orders for his murder.

The Hebrew text, on the other hand, presents serious internal difficulties, and appears to combine two inconsistent accounts of David's introduction to the court of Saul. The most probable conclusion appears to be that the Septuagint preserves the text of these chapters in the form in which it was originally published, and that at some subsequent date the additions now found in the Hebrew text were made from a different source, either documentary or traditional. It may seem to some readers rash to doubt the integrity of the Hebrew text. But it must be borne in mind that the Septuagint is by far the most ancient evidence we possess for the text of the Old Testament, the oldest known Hebrew ms. not being earlier than the tenth (or possibly ninth) century A.D., and that though the additions to the Hebrew text were doubtless made before the Christian era, the Greek Scriptures used by the Evangelists and Apostles in all probability did not contain the passages of which the genuineness is suspected. A. F. K.

On the whole, we are inclined to the opinion that, while the narrative itself is strictly authentic, the text, as we possess it, is seriously corrupted in some of the expressions, especially in the concluding verses of the sixteenth chapter. A. E.—The difficulties which appear on the comparison of the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Samuel, as they stand in our text,

may arise from the interweaving of different narratives in an order not strictly chronological. There is an evident reason for placing the departure of Jehovah's spirit from Saul in immediate contrast with its descent on David. F. S. —According to our view the order of events was this : David's first visit to Saul to play before him on his harp was a very short one. Some time after the conflict with Goliath occurred. David's appearance had probably changed considerably, so that Saul did not recognize him. It was now that Saul attached David to himself, kept him permanently, and would not let him return to his father's house (18 : 2). And while David acted as musician, playing to him on his harp in the paroxysms of his ailment (18 : 10), he went out at his command on military expeditions, and acquired great renown as a warrior (18 : 5). Thus, to turn back to the sixteenth chapter, the last two verses of that chapter record the permanent office before Saul which David came to fill after the slaughter of the Philistine. In fact, we find in that chapter, as often elsewhere, a brief outline of the whole course of events, some of which are filled up in minute detail in the chapter following. W. G. B.

Both the preparation of the Philistines to invade the Hebrews, and of Saul to oppose the Philistines, were after David's first introduction to and dismissal from Saul, and his three brethren's going into the army ; and must require some considerable space of time. Suppose it was two or three years ; what is there improbable that a youth, who had been so little with Saul, should, after a year or two's absence, not even be remembered by him in person, at first view ; especially as Saul had himself been engaged in a multiplicity of important affairs since his first interview with David, had seen such a variety of different persons, and had been greatly disordered by the melancholy turn of his own mind ? But it is still less to be wondered at that he should not remember his parentage, as that could then be of no importance to him ; which is the only thing the sacred historian affirms. *Chandler.*

Chap. 17 : 1-37. A story graphically told, among the few Old Testament incidents which takes and holds possession of childhood's attention and memory. The Philistines were a powerful people, with cities of considerable size, dwelling on the southern sea-coast plain of Canaan. Though victories had been gained over them under the judges, especially by Shamgar and Samson, and under Samuel, they were still a numerous and warlike nation, only brought

into subjection after this period by David. Now again, as repeatedly during the four preceding centuries, they sought to subjugate and oppress Israel. The two armies were encamped, in hostile array, on either ridge rising from the vale of Elah. "The ridges on each side rise to the height of about 500 feet, and have a uniform slope, so that the armies ranged along them could see the combat in the valley. The distance between the armies was about a mile." Goliath's gigantic appearance (nine feet high), the enormous size and weight of his armor, and his natural confidence of victory in single combat, are fully described in verses 4-10. And then occurs the very natural event—i.e., the *Providence*, which brings David upon the scene, and subsequently into Saul's presence again, after an interval possibly of about two or three years (verses 12-31). The envious anger of Eliab against David, and David's meekness and yet firm defence of his righteous indignation against this giant defier of Israel, form an instructive episode in this part of the narrative. The colloquy between Saul and David, too, is full of suggestion. Indeed, you read here the secret and inspiration of the after defiance, combat, and victory of David. "Let no man's heart fail," he said to Saul. "Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And when Saul would dissuade him because of his youth and lack of *training* (not of stature or vigor), there came from his *believing* and therefore courageous soul, the response which is the key to all that follows: "*The Lord that delivered me from the lion and the bear, He will deliver me from this Philistine.*" B

1, 2. The whole scene of the defiance of David by Goliath lies here before us. As *Azekah* lies on the south side of a wide and not very deep valley, *Sochok*, or *Socoh* (now Suweikeh), commands the valley on the north side, retired about a mile from its centre. The valley is the *Vale of Elah* or "the terebinth," now Wady Sumt—i.e., "of the acacia." The name of a different tree, equally characteristic of the district, has been adopted; but still the butm, or terebinth, grows, and the celebrated butm of es Sumt is probably the largest tree of the kind in Palestine. A little way below Suweikeh, or *Socoh*, two other wadys fall into it, the whole forming an open space covered with fields, opposite which, probably, the Philistines encamped on the south side, at *Ephes-dammim*, now Damûn. In the centre is a pebbly torrent bed, "smooth stones of the brook," and stunted acacias growing here and there. The Israelites were camped nearer *Socoh*, on the north side. On

the intervening open space the unequal contest took place between the champion of the Philistines and the youthful hero. *Tristram*.

11. Taking into account the enormous stature of this man and his dreadful clanking tramp under two hundred weight of metal, it is scarcely wonderful that the very sight of him filled the Israelites with terror, and that no one was found ready to engage in the single combat with him, which with terrible shouts and thundering voice he invited, as a mode of settling the contest between the two nations. *Kil*.

23-26. At this critical juncture a new sort of hero appeared on the Hebrew side. The youthful shepherd of Bethlehem, sent by his father Jesse with army supplies for his three older brethren in Saul's army, happened there just at the moment when this Goliath strode down the hill for his morning challenge. His ear caught the taunting tones and words; his quick eye noted the panic which shook the Hebrew lines, and his soul was stirred within him. He soon learned the pending issues—the call for some hero to dare the single-handed fight in behalf of Israel; and he felt—what no one else had seemed to feel—the insult offered to Israel's God, and the inspiration of a sublime confidence that their own Jehovah would surely avenge his own honor and wipe out this reproach, if only some one would go forth in his name to this conflict. H. C.

28. Eliab seems to have become a great man afterward. We read of him as a prince of the tribe of Judah, and of his daughter or his grand-daughter as the queen of Rehoboam. But we find him here exhibiting the contrary character to Samuel's and David's, and saying and doing exactly what Saul might have done. It is an instance of envy, of harsh, uncharitable judgment. *Abp. Benson*.

29. The strong faith by which he was actuated was attended with a meek temper and a forbearing heart. "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" No railing returned for railing, when his noble spirit of self-sacrifice met with this undeserved abuse. This admirable spirit of self-command already marked out David as a ruler of men. W. G. B. —If David had wanted spirit, he had not been troubled with the insult of a Philistine. If he had a spirit to match Goliath, how doth he so calmly receive the affront of a brother? It was a brother that wronged him, and that his eldest; neither was it time to quarrel with his brother while the Philistines' swords were drawn and Goliath was challenging. This conquest is not less glorious than the following. He is fit

to be God's champion, that hath learned to be victor of himself. *Bp. II.*

34-37. This relation of David's is admirable for the united dignity and humility of mind which it displays. David's temperance and modesty in reciting his own praises are remarkable. He describes his combat with the lion in the shortest and simplest narration that ever was made of such a combat, and says no more of his combat with the bear than that he slew him; and as if this had been too much, he concludes all in the style of a man who had been delivered by God, not who had conquered by his own prowess. *Delaney.*—David does not boast or talk of his strength and courage in killing the lion and the bear; for he knew that the strength and courage came from God, not from himself; therefore he says that the Lord *delivered him* from them. He knew that he had been only doing his duty in facing them when they attacked his father's sheep, and that it was God's mercy which had protected him in doing his duty. *C. Kingsley.*

David saw God upon the scene. Israel saw nothing but that tower of brass. He saw also the arm of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. They compared themselves with Goliath. He contrasted Goliath with Jehovah. They heard nothing but the derisive boasts of their adversary and the voice of their own misgivings. He heard only the promise of the faithful God: "Be strong, . . . be not afraid, for the Lord thy God is with thee." And David had *experience* of Jehovah's faithfulness. The God who protected him when he fought for his father's sheep he knew would not forsake him when he fought for God's own fold. And David's confidence in God was reasonable from another point of view. He might well ask, "Is there not a cause?" The interest of Israel, the honor of Jehovah, were at stake: it was reasonable, therefore, to believe that he would not be left to fight alone. It was reasonable to believe that God had not brought him there to leave him helpless or to have him turn his back and flee. That faith which we first draw from the promises of God may get confirmation from his providence, until doubt is banished and we advance without a fear. This is not fanaticism; it is the right blending of reason and faith. *Mitchell.*

38, 39. *Saul puts his own armor upon David, but David puts it off.* The putting on of Saul's armor shows that David, though youthful, was a full-sized man, or it shows Saul as acting absurdly, with David's consent. And David's reason for putting off, confirms the former al-

ternative statement "I have not proved" the armor. He had had no practice or training in the use of helmet, coat of mail, or sword. But while this reason was valid and just, there was another motive, far deeper and more powerful, which actuated him in declining the armor of a warrior. It was the faith in his heart, afterward openly declared, that this was the Lord's battle, and not his, in behalf of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord which was upon him, the Spirit, who first wrought a righteous indignation in David when listening to the blasphemous defiance of the Philistine, now led him to a simple dependence upon God for success in the combat. Here is the golden truth and lesson of this story, *the same, one truth* that runs alike through Old Testament and New, *that the heart's trust in God secures God's alliance, and ensures success and triumph.* But faith must use means when means it has; must fight or act or work when God bids it. So we read,

40. *David takes his own simple but "proved" weapons.* All ancient Eastern nations, especially the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, and the Hebrews, used the sling as a weapon of war. The tribe of Benjamin was noted for its skilful left-handed slingers. With this familiar and long-proved instrument, David was by no means unarmed in his encounter with Goliath. On some accounts the advantage was his. He could make the first assault long before his adversary could use sword or even spear. And no protection of helmet would avail against a missile so small, and hurled with such force and precision into the open outlet for vision. More than this, because of his freedom from all harness, David could have easily kept at a desired distance, and made a second attack had that been needed. All this, Goliath seems to have had no thought of; indeed he neither saw David's sling, which was covered by the hand, nor the five smooth stones hidden in his shepherd's bag. The staff, in David's other hand, was all the weapon he saw, the sight of which enraged him to the cursing of David. *B.*

David's sling had been with him in many a day of shepherd life; he knew how to put a smooth stone from the brook straight and swift to its mark. And however thoroughly shielded by his helmet and coat of mail Goliath might be, he could not fight without eyes nor see without exposing them somewhat to such a missile as a small smooth stone. How much space adjacent to the eye was exposed does not appear; not much was needful for David's mark. So the thing was done. *H. C.*

They were "chosen" stones, each one select-

ed, picked with the nicest eye for the smoothness which should send it straight and true. And there were *five*. Faith, if it shall fail at first, does not intend to turn and flee. In work for God much may depend even on the weight and smoothness of a word. A word fitly spoken, a word in season,—everything may turn on that. We have need to seek for discrimination and for skill as well as to pray for nerve. The spiritual marksman must not rely on chance, and then call his indolence by the name of faith. An eye well trained chose for David that serviceable stone, and then it was the drill of years which drove it whistling to its mark. *Mitchell.*

He drew near to the Philistine. So strong and clear (as expressed) was his faith that he could not doubt the issue of this conflict. He went out to it with no trepidation of doubt or fear. His eye was never more clear nor his right arm more true. We must, therefore, assume that this faith had become the quiet habit of his mind. Out on the hills of Bethlehem, caring for his flock by day or by night, he had walked with God. Those days or months or years which intervened between his first meeting with Samuel and this meeting with Goliath were full of discipline and exercise to his faith in Israel's God. Out of communion with God in prayer, there is wont to come forth at length such easy achievements as these on this great day of Jehovah's triumphs through the hand of the youthful but prayerful David. *H. C.*

41-44. *The haughty, boastful greeting of Goliath.* We can almost see and hear the man, so graphic is the account. A giant champion, magnificently and terribly panoplied, doubly armed for offence with huge sword and enormous spear, and attended by a shield-bearer; first deliberately examining this youthful opponent, and disdaining him because without armor of brass or iron, defensive or offensive; then discerning only the shepherd's rod, his pride takes offence, and he curses, as we have said; and following this, manifesting his utter contempt of David, and his absolute reliance upon his own might, by the boast "*I will give thy flesh unto the fowls and to the beasts.*" *B.*—The last words that ever the Philistine shall speak are curses and brags. Seldom ever was there a good end of ostentation. Presumption is, at once, the presage and cause of ruin. *Bp. H.*

45.-47. *David's sublime recognition of the supreme might of the Lord of Hosts.* God's ever indwelling, controlling Providence in human affairs, His personal rule in men's actual lives, especially His interposition when needful, to honor His own name, to carry out His own pur-

poses, and to protect His own trusting servants; these are the grounds of David's responding defiance and bold assurance. These are the grand truths he affirms when, avowedly speaking as the Lord's champion, he says, "All this assembly shall *know* that the battle is the Lord's." *B.*—Verily, David had ideas and had words—grand ideas and fitting words—as well as courage of soul and a trusty sling. *H. C.*

The contrasts of character, of motive and ground of action, are extreme in the two men. The one is proud, self-reliant, arrogantly assured of his own strength and sufficiency, saying, "*I will give thy flesh,*" etc. The other is humble, resting upon God, a God who has already proven his might and his willingness to deliver. One represents man as man is by nature, without recognition of God, much less any spirit of obedience or trust toward God, a god to himself, especially worshipping the very gifts of the living God, as strength or beauty of intellect or person, wealth, or place and power. So pride, boasting, self-reliance are gendered, and the soul goes down in life's battle, for this battle is man's, not the Lord's. The other represents man in possession and control of the Spirit of the Lord—man as he becomes by grace, trusting, hoping, resting in the Lord, in His wisdom and might, able to utter and evermore singing as his own the Christian Psalm of life, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He leadeth me! Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life!"

48-51. *David's assault and instant victory.* In proof of his plainly expressed reliance upon the Lord who saveth not with sword and spear, instantly enacting the prophet-like and priest-like spirit in which he had spoken, stirred by the presence of that vast assemblage, and by the greatness of the issues involved, and in all and above all, his courage and faith inspired directly by the Spirit of the Lord, he hasted toward the Philistine, and as he hasted hurled the smiting stone, which struck and sunk into the forehead of Israel's deier. No time or opportunity had the smitten champion for assault or defence, for the Lord of Hosts had responded to the appeal of His champion and guided as well as nerved the arm of David. So the sling and stone prevailed against sword and spear and shield and mailed person. Then followed the completion of David's bold prophecy. With the Philistine's own sword David slew and beheaded him as he lay fallen to the earth, and the army of Israel pursuing the flying hosts of Philistia, destroyed them in vast numbers, and

their bodies were given "to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the earth."

The same humility, the same simple-hearted modesty which had characterized David thus far, is evinced in the sequel of this incident. Only because called to action by the Spirit of God, he had put himself forward to do God's will. In God's name, for God's honor and the deliverance of His people, David had wrought for God. The issue was signal, and the benefits great and lasting. Yet with no sign of personal elation, no thought of display nor attempt to turn the event to his own advantage, with only the rewarding consciousness of God's blessing, he goes back to his lowly avocation in his father's house, and calmly waits God's time and further summons. B.—At the end of the fight, all the army of Israel shouted, but one hears no shout from David—sees no vaunting in him, for a man who walks or fights in faith can never boast himself as they do who walk or fight after the flesh. D. F.

This event was a turning-point in the history, and marked David as the true king of Israel, ready to take up the Philistine challenge of God and of His people, to kindle in Israel a new spirit, and, in the might of the living God, to bring the contest to victory. A. E.—This first heroic deed of David was of the greatest importance to him and all Israel, for it was his first step on the way to the throne to which Jehovah had resolved to raise him. Keil.—Raised by the nation, he raised and glorified it in return; and, standing at the crowning point of the history of the nation, he concentrates in himself all its brilliance, and becomes the one man of greatest renown in the whole course of its existence. Ewald.

55-58. What is recorded here could have taken place only after the pursuit of the Philistines was over, and these verses should be united with ch. 18, as their object is to introduce the account of the love of Jonathan for David. Starting then with the inquiry made by the king of Abner, asking for fuller information as to the young man's parentage, the historian then tells how after the chase he was brought before Saul, and then, in ch. 18 : 1, that the result of their conversation was the warm love that henceforward knit together these two kindred souls. R. P. S.

Ch. 18. A third character is here introduced into the personal history, one of singular beauty and attractiveness. The son of Saul, his eldest—about the age of David—stands forth in marked contrast of spirit and conduct with the father. The lesson which God had just now so

signally taught,—that the fewest and feeblest, in alliance with Him, should be victorious against the most numerous and mightiest of the common enemy,—Saul has not learned, for he is past considering any good lesson. But Jonathan has read this lesson anew; as before he had learned it, in his own similar experience of *believing courage*, when he matched himself, with only his like-minded armor-bearer, against a garrisoned army of the Philistines at Michmash, and with like success. The extreme contrast of feeling and action in the two, father and son, concentrated upon the same person, presents one of the cardinal facts comprised in the chapter. The affectionate and kind spirit, and the wise behavior of David in response to the contrasted treatment of Jonathan and Saul, presents the other principal fact.

1. *The source and basis of Jonathan's devoted affection for David.* The occasion which brought out this love was David's whole bearing and behavior with reference to the combat with Goliath. At this period, as we have seen, though carrying in his countenance the bloom of youth, David was of full stature, of remarkable maturity in wisdom and self-control, and possessed of a deep, fervid faith in God. His physical and mental vigor, and not less his spiritual life, had been harmoniously developed by the severe training and thoughtful quietude of his shepherd years. These years had furnished occasions for watchful protection and courageous defence of the flock, and had also afforded abundant opportunity for devout musing upon the works and ways of Jehovah. And it was the one signal result of this Providential training under culture of the Divine Spirit, apparent in his great exploit before the assembled hostile armies, it was the wonderful combination of assured faith in God and manifest courage of soul, joined with his subsequent unaffected simplicity of behavior, it was this that wrought so powerfully in the responsive soul of Jonathan, kindling a love to David that "was wonderful, passing the love of women." For the same spirit of sublime faith and courage, the same simple-hearted fidelity had previously characterized this noble son of Saul. And it was this congeniality of spiritual temper and trust in Jehovah, which drew them together and knit their souls in a friendship whose beauty and force has been transmitted as a type and an example through all succeeding ages of human history. B.

It is no disparagement of David to say that Jonathan shines most in this friendship, because it was he that had least to gain, and most

to lose in connection with it. Tender as a woman, and yet true as steel, overflowing with generous kindness, utterly devoid of selfishness, trusting as much as he was trusted, with a heart that reflected David's, as face answereth to face in water, Jonathan was the paragon and perfect pattern of a friend. *Guthrie.*

3. Jonathan and David made a covenant. We are not to suppose that this happened immediately. David continued on friendly terms with Saul for a considerable period, during which he went on many expeditions, and grew in military renown. And thus the love which began with admiration of David's prowess grew deeper and more confirmed by constant intercourse, till this solemn bond of mutual friendship was entered into by the two youthful heroes, by which they bound themselves under all circumstances to be true and faithful to one another. How nobly Jonathan kept the bond the history proceeds immediately to tell us ; nor was David subsequently unmindful of it. R. P. S.

5. David's advancement, and faithful service to Saul. From the day of the combat, Saul had taken David into his palace. He made him his armor-bearer, and for a time "loved him greatly." Advancing him to higher place and authority, Saul made him military leader, still re-

taining him near his own person. For a considerable period David enjoyed the affection of father and son, and was a favorite alike with the courtiers in the palace and the people among whom he was sent. In him we have one instance of high advancement and universal popularity without any elation of spirit or change of behavior. With no thought of selfish ambition, he preserved his unaffected modesty of bearing, "behaved himself wisely," was faithful to every trust, obediently "went out whithersoever Saul sent him," leading the forces of Israel in various expeditions against the still hostile Philistines, always carrying himself valiantly and prudently, and achieving great successes in the continuous warfare. So wise in behavior, so modest in bearing, so popular with court and people, and so successful in achievement, because "the Lord was *with* him." And it was this very favor and success which brought about a change in Saul, because "the Lord had *departed from* him." B.—It was certainly a great instance of the power of God's grace in David, that he was able to bear all this respect and honor flowing in upon him of a sudden, without being lifted up above measure. Those that climb so fast, have need of good heads and good hearts ; it is harder to know how to abound, than how to be abased. H.

Section 243.

SAUL'S MALICIOUS HATRED. MICHAL GIVEN TO DAVID. DAVID'S RENEWED SUCCESSES, AND SAUL'S MURDEROUS PURSUIT. DAVID ESCAPES TO SAMUEL. SAUL'S MESSENGERS AND SAUL CONSTRAINED TO PROPHECY.

1 SAMUEL 18 : 6-30 ; 19 : 1-24.

18 6 AND it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet **7** king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another in their play, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him ; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands : and what can he have **9** more but the kingdom ? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house : and David played with his hand, as he did day **11** by day : and Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul cast the spear ; for he said, I will **12** smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was **13** afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul

removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand ; and he went out and
 14 came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways ; and the LORD
 15 was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of
 16 him. But all Israel and Judah loved David ; for he went out and came in before them.

Verses 17-27. Saul offers his eldest daughter in marriage to David, but gives her to another. He offers Michal on condition of David's slaying a hundred Philistines. David slays two hundred.

28 And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD
 29 was with David ; and Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of
 David ; and Saul was David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth : and it came to pass, as often as they went
 forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul ; so that his name
 was much set by.

19 1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay
 2 David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, saying,
 Saul my father seeketh to slay thee : now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the
 3 morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself : and I will go out and stand beside my
 father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee ; and if I see
 4 aught, I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto
 him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David ; because he hath not sinned
 5 against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good : for he put his life in
 his hand, and smote the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great victory for all Israel : thou
 sawest it, and didst rejoice : wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay
 6 David without a cause ? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan : and Saul sware,
 7 As the LORD liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan
 shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence,
 as beforetime.

Verses 8-17. After an interval of quiet, David's success in conflict awakens Saul's hatred and assault. David escapes with Michal's connivance.

18 Now David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had
 19 done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying,
 20 Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David : and when
 they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them,
 21 the spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it
 was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers
 22 again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to
 the great well that is in Secu : and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David ? And
 23 one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah :
 and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to
 24 Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel,
 and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among
 the prophets ?

The phase of David's history on which we now enter embraces the period from his introduction to the court of Saul to the death of that monarch ; the period of what may be called his hero life. It was for David a time of very various fortune. Whether in Saul's service—first as captain over a thousand of the ordinary tribal conscripts, and, latterly, as commander of the king's body-guard ; or, again, as the chief of a band of freebooters, who gathered around him after his outlawry, in the wilderness of Judah, and in the land of the Philistines at Ziklag, a common character belonged to the life of David all through these years. Wild feats of arms, often against overwhelming odds, in which, by

his great military genius, his personal daring, and the command he exercised over his comrades in arms, he met with almost unvarying success—such were the every-day incidents of his life at a period in which he appears to have been undergoing the special discipline, previously denied him, for an important part of the work which awaited him after his accession to the throne. *Lee.*

6-9. The narrative has made a digression to relate the circumstances of David's permanent reception into Saul's service, the commencement of the friendship between him and Jonathan, and his ultimate promotion and success. It now goes back to relate the welcome which

David received when the army returned in triumph from the successful completion of the Philistine war. Ch. 18 : 6 is to be read (as it actually stands in the Sept.) in connection with 17 : 54, though some time may have elapsed, during which the army was occupied in following up its first success. A. F. K.

The fact that David was held in such high esteem came to Saul's notice in a way that was specially offensive,—in a comparison of himself with David, and that on the score of personal valor and success in conflict. As David was returning after signal victory over the Philistines, the women of the cities, as was their wont, came forth to celebrate the victor's triumph with song and dance. And although Saul saw that David remained unmoved by their praise, and still "behaved himself very wisely," though he knew that the victories of David only enured to his own glory and the firmer establishment of his throne, yet the proud, haughty soul of the king heeded naught but his own selfish feeling of humiliation in the comparison set forth by the women's song. Combined envy and jealousy were gendered in his heart, and bred instant suspicion that this was the man who should supplant him on his throne. And as these evil passions rankled within him, the suspicion ripened into the thought that David was even now seeking his overthrow. A new development this of the progress of wilful selfishness, of the evil spirit in his heart. First, working self-dependence and positive disobedience to God—then repeated falsehood, meanness in asking Samuel to honor him before the people, and utter disregard of Jehovah, and now malignant envy and jealousy leading to "cruel hatred," and afterward to deliberate, murderous persecution of David. He sees falsely because of his own falseness of heart ; thinks evil of another because he thinks it in himself. Under the control of the "evil spirit" he has become fixedly disobedient, lost to truth, to manliness, to honor, to gratitude, to truth. Therefore "from that day and forward he eyed David," watched him closely, with envious, malignant feeling and murderous purpose. B.

Envy is the worst of all passions, and feedeth upon the spirits, and they again upon the body ; and so much the more because it is perpetual, and, as it is said, keepeth no holidays. *Bacon.*—As it shows itself in hatred it strikes at the person envied ; but as it affects a man in the nature of grief it recoils and does execution upon the envier. It lies at the heart like a worm, always gnawing and corroding and piercing it with a secret, invisible sting and poison.

South.—Derangement was the consequence of disobedience. The wilfulness which first resisted God next preyed upon itself, as a natural principle of disorder ; his moods and changes, his compunctions and relapses, what were they but the convulsions of the spirit when the governing power was lost ? *Newman.*

10, 11. *Saul's first attempt to take the life of David.* This occurred during a frenzy of madness, induced by this letting loose of his own passions upon him, with the seconding of Satan (both of which are brought about through the permissive agency of God in simply abandoning self-willed sinners to "their own way"). At the very moment when the still faithful, helpful David holds the harp, and, as aforetime, gently sweeps its strings in kindly service of soothing to the monarch's troubled mind, Saul grasps his spear and hurls it with deadly purpose at the breast of David. Twice did he this, and twice the watchfulness and prompt avoidance of David averted the guilt of actual murder from the wretched Saul. And here, too, the courage and faith of David are to be noted. With no feeling of anger or thought of retaliation, without even a word of remonstrance, yet not lacking in spirit, he withdraws himself, and returns again to discharge his helpful ministry, and desists only when it is plain that his presence only aggravates the king's insanity, and uselessly endangers himself. Faithful to God, he is faithful to the Lord's anointed king. His assurance is still the same ; that the Lord will continue to deliver him from peril encountered in fulfilling duty. B.

The spear served as a sceptre, and was the symbol of royalty. The King held it in his hand when he sat in council (22 : 6) or in his house (19 : 9) ; it was kept by his side when he sat at table (20 : 33) ; stuck in the ground by his pillow as he slept in camp (26 : 7). A. F. K.

12, 13. *David dismissed from the palace to the camp.* When Saul "came to himself," the failure of his double attempt upon David's life seems to have suggested the thought of God's interposition, and of his own daring defiance in thus himself seeking directly to thwart the will of Jehovah. This alone explains his fear of David. But it wrought no change in his purpose, only in his plans, of which we read hereafter. Now he only seeks to be rid of the hated presence, and the sight of the favor and affection with which David is regarded in the palace. He therefore removes him from his court, separates him from his son, exiles him to the camp, and for a long period engaged him constantly in military expeditions. And so unwittingly Saul

counteracted his own selfish purposes by giving David the opportunity, through wise, upright, and valiant behavior, of securing the "love of all Israel and Judah as he went out and came in before them."

14. *David's prudence in all his ways, the Lord being with him.* He behaved wisely because "the Lord was with him," and the Lord continued to be with and to prosper him because "he behaved wisely in all his ways," because he trusted only in God, seeking simply to know and do His will. With consummate prudence, in true loyalty of soul, he fulfils every mandate of the king, adds to his high repute as a warrior and leader, and augments the good-will and draws forth the commendations of the people, by the fuller manifestation of his inherently devout and kingly spirit.

15, 16. *Saul's fear increases, with the people's love of David.* As men commonly act, we might infer that the fear should have been on David's part, as his life was the endangered one. But all the fear is in Saul's heart. And the ground of Saul's fear (thrice referred to in this chapter) was that David was encompassed with a Divine protection, was Divinely endowed with a royal spirit, and so worthy of a Divine anointing and appointing to the kingdom; while from himself the Lord had departed, with all of nobleness that had once been his, and now he, by his own doing, was consciously unworthy of the throne, nay, unworthy to live. How could he help fearing, and how *must such* fear, rankling in his conscience and maddening his soul, breed suspicion and hate, which spurred him on to the planned attempts for David's destruction which follow! B.

24, 25. David's answer exactly fell in with Saul's purposes, and he forthwith asked as a dowry proof of David having slain a hundred Philistines. As this slaughter would have to be effected not in regular warfare, but in a sort of private raid, there would be every likelihood of David being overpowered by a rapid gathering of the Philistines and slain in attempting it. R. P. S.

27-30. When the time expired, he appeared before the king with not only an hundred, but with two hundred, such proofs of his prowess as the king had required. This great exploit led only to David's greater honor, and materially advanced the results which the king desired to avert. *Kit.*—Michal cannot be refused, and he becomes the king's son-in-law. Again the Philistines come out to battle, and again David behaves himself more wisely and more valiantly than all the servants of Saul, and stands, not

by marriage only, but by merit, nearer than any other subject to the throne. *Lee.*—Saul thought, by putting him upon dangerous services, to have him taken off, but that very thing confirmed his interest in the people; for the more he did against the Philistines, the better they loved him, so that *his name was much set by*, which would make his coming to the crown the more easy. Thus God makes even the wrath of man to praise him, and serves his designs of kindness to his own people by it. H.

19: 1-6. All this but deepens the hatred of the king. Craft has failed. Let the purpose then be openly avowed, and force be tried. Saul speaks "to Jonathan and to all his servants that they should kill David." The sharp remonstrance of his own son lays bare, even to Saul's own sight, the ingratitude and the baseness of the project; and in a moment of relenting, Saul swears that he shall not be put to death. *Hanna.*—Jonathan, on this occasion, showed himself an admirable son, thus solicitous to preserve his father's honor; and an incomparable friend, thus to plead for his innocent, injured friend, even in opposition to the tyrant who was bent on his destruction. *Chandler.*

8-10. Saul seems to have been quiet till a new occasion of jealousy arose; "war again;" David went out and fought, and slew the Philistines with great slaughter, and they fled. Then the evil spirit of jealousy came again upon Saul; David played before him; Saul again hurled his javelin to kill him, with no better success than before. David not only evaded the shaft, but escaped from the house. H. C.—Again the devil of jealousy creeps into his morbid, selfish heart, and he sees in David, the faithful servant of his throne, a scheming usurper only and traitor, waiting to vault into his place. The evil he sees in David is really in his own wild, ugly passion, but instead of strangling that, he tries to murder him! *Bushnell.*

God continues his care of David, and Saul missed his blow; David fled and by a kind providence *escaped that night*. To these preservations among others David often refers in his psalms when he speaks of God's delivering his *soul from death*. H.—That night was the commencement of his *open persecution by Saul*, and of the long and varied troubles he experienced as an outlaw. He had been at court some three or four years, and now at three-and-twenty went forth to his seven years' wanderings. B. D.—Here we may begin to find definite points of coincidence between this history of David, written probably by Samuel or by Gad (David's



RAMAH, SAMUEL'S HOME.

seer), and his own Psalms. Psalm 59 is definitely located at this point in his history, "When Saul sent and they watched the house to kill him." Here, then, we may raise the question, What were the thoughts of his heart under these stern and sore afflictions? Did he look upward to God for help? Did he prove the priceless comfort of prayer in human emergencies? He himself gives the answer in the psalm. H. C.

18. As might almost have been anticipated, David's destination in his flight was Ramah. To tell Samuel, who had anointed him, all that had happened; to ask his guidance, and seek refreshment in his company, would obviously suggest itself first to his mind. For greater safety, the two withdrew from the city, to "Naioth," "the dwellings," which seems to have been a block of dwellings within a compound, occupied by an order of prophets, of which Samuel was the "president," and, we may add, the founder. A. E.—In this sanctuary the son of Jesse remained some time before Saul learned where he was. Here he was in an atmosphere congenial to his best feelings, his highest tastes, and holiest aspirations; and here his accomplishments in sacred minstrelsy and song had ample scope and exercise, enabling him to join heart and soul in their harmonious

"prophesyings." *Kil.*—He found there only temporary safety from Saul's persecution, but abiding consolation and strength in the inspired prophetic word, in the blessings of the fraternal community, and in the consoling and elevating power of the holy poetic art, whereby he doubtless stood in peculiarly intimate connection with the community. *Erdmann.*

21. Saul's messengers came to lay hold on David: God lays hold on them. No sooner do they see a company of prophets busy in those Divine exercises, under the moderation of Samuel, than they are turned from executioners to prophets. Many a one hath come into God's house to carp, or scoff, or sleep, or gaze, that hath returned a convert. *Bp. H.*

23. **He went on, and prophesied.** So strangely obstinate and wicked was Saul that he not only contended with the Spirit of God in sending others, but resolved at the last to go himself, as if he could oppose the Spirit of God: on the way, however, he was inspired by God and he sang praises as did the prophets. This was to convince him that he labored in a vain pursuit after David, whom the Spirit of God powerfully defended. *Patrick.*—He was seized by this mighty influence of the Spirit of God in a more powerful manner than his servants were,

both because he had most obstinately resisted the leadings of Divine grace, and also in order that, if it were possible, *his hard heart might be broken* and subdued by the power of grace. If, however, he should nevertheless continue obstinately in his rebellion against God, he would then fall under the judgment of hardening, which would be followed by destruction. *Keil.*

24. He had taken off his outward garment, his military habit and royal robe, and thus appeared like the rest of the prophets, a plain, disarmed, and therefore *naked* man. *Chandler.*—

Wherefore they say, Is Saul also.

This was mentioned as a proverb, by anticipation, at ch. 10 : 11, 12, since the origin of the proverb is here expressly referred to this second prophesying. This proverb was used to express anything unlooked for and improbable. The meaning is, Is Saul, who throughout his whole reign hath so much slighted and contemned the law, and would conduct his actions by the mere rules of human policy, is he at length become studious of, and zealous for, the law of God? *Warburton.*

Section 244.

DAVID WITH JONATHAN. PLANS OF PROTECTION AGAINST SAUL. THEIR PARTING.

1 SAMUEL 20 : 1-42.

20 1 AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?
2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me: and why should my father hide this thing from
3 me? it is not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father knoweth well that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.
4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

Verses 5-11. *David's plan of accounting for his absence carried out by Jonathan, verses 27-29.*

12 And Jonathan said unto David, The LORD, the God of Israel, *be witness*; when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, *or the third day*, behold, if there be good toward
13 David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? The LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been
14 with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD,
15 that I die not: but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever: no, not
16 when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David; *saying*, And the LORD shall require it at
17 the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Verses 18-23. *Jonathan's device about the arrows carried out in verses 35-40.*

24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him
25 down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was empty.
26 Nevertheless Saul spake not anything that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him,
27 he is not clean; surely he is not clean. And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, *which was the second day*, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan
28 his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem: and he said,
29 Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I
30 pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he is not come unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and
31 unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him
32 unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him,
33 Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath he done? And Saul cast his spear at him

to smite him : whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to
 34 death. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day
 of the month : for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.
 35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time ap-
 36 pointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the
 37 arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad
 was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and
 38 said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste,
 39 stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad
 40 knew not anything : only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his
 41 weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. And as soon as the lad
 was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and
 bowed himself three times : and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until
 42 David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both
 of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD shall be between me and thee, and between
 my seed and thy seed, forever. And he arose and departed : and Jonathan went into the city.

There is an essential difference between the in-
 spired and the uninspired narratives. In the
 one the inward state of the heart is disclosed,
 and upon that the course and issue of each par-
 ticular history is made to turn ; while in the
 human narrative only the outward act is shown,
 and upon it mainly is the particular character
 estimated. In this inspired story God opens to
 our view the heart of each of these men, Saul,
 David, and Jonathan ; and He reveals to us
 herein the presence of His Spirit as bringing
 about and producing all good, and His absence
 as permitting the evil spirit in man and in Satan
 to bring about all evil. And so we learn that
 everything noble, beautiful, and Christ-like in
 the spirit and conduct of Jonathan is the *effect*
 of the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart,
 no less than in David's ; and further still, that
 the matchless character and fruit of his friend-
 ship is here portrayed mainly to set the seal of
 God's approval upon human friendship based
 upon mutual consecration to His will and ser-
 vice. These latter considerations underlie the
 whole history of this incomparable attachment,
 and lend to it its chief charm and value.

1-34. King and messengers had been arrested
 by the supernatural might of the Divine Spirit,
 and irresistibly constrained to abide and proph-
 esy among the assembled prophets, with Samuel
 at their head. Even this manifest protection of
 David by God's own Spirit did not avail to check
 Saul's murderous pursuit. He is now past *warn-*
ing! The secret interview of David and Jona-
 than next occurs, after the former has fled from
 Naioth. In this prolonged conversation Jona-
 than's high faith in God stands forth in contrast
 with David's despondency. Jonathan undertakes
 to ascertain if any change had taken place in
 Saul's feeling, and to inform David by a pre-con-
 certed arrangement and sign. Two days after,

in the face of Saul's fierce wrath, and his de-
 mand that David shall be surrendered to be
 slain, Jonathan boldly asks, "Wherefore shall
 he be slain? What hath he done?" And when
 Saul now hurls his spear to smite his son, Jona-
 than, unheeding his own danger, but grieved
 and angered on account of the wrong purposed
 against David, goes hastily from the table before
 the food is touched. B.

1-23. The account of what passed between
 them—one of the few narratives of this kind
 given in Scripture—is most pathetic. It shows
 that, though Jonathan had never spoken of it,
 he was fully aware of David's future destiny ;
 more than that, he had presentiment of the fate
 of his own house. And yet, in full view of it
 all, he believingly submitted to the will of God,
 and still lovingly clave to his friend ! There is
 a tone of deep faith toward God, and of full
 trust in David, in what Jonathan said. Far
 more fully and clearly than his father does he
 see into the future, alike as regards David and
 the house of Saul. But there is not a tinge of
 misunderstanding of David, not a shadow of
 suspicion, not a trace of jealousy, not a word of
 murmur or complaint. More touching words,
 surely, were never uttered than this charge
 which Jonathan laid on David as *his* part of
 their covenant, in view of what was to come upon
 them both : "And not only if I am still alive—
 not only shalt thou do with me the mercy of Je-
 hovah" (show toward me Divine mercy) "that I
 die not ; but thou shalt not cut off thy mercy
 from my house—not even" (at the time) "when
 Jehovah cutteth off the enemies of David, every
 one from the face of the earth" (verses 14, 15).
 A. E.

This deep love was based on a common faith.
 Jonathan like David found his strength in God.
 Their covenant was a "covenant of Jehovah."

Jonathan rejoiced in the prospect of David's advancement without a shadow of jealousy, because he saw it was God's will. No suspicion of selfishness tainted that noble friendship. The tenderness of the son in some measure effaced the hard treatment of the father : and when they fell together on the fatal field of Mount Gilboa, David could enshrine their memories together in the most touching requiem of the whole Bible. A. F. K.

30, 31. Who can ever judge of the children by the parents, that knows Jonathan was the son of Saul? There was never a falser heart than Saul's ; there was never a truer friend than Jonathan. Neither the hope of a kingdom, nor the frowns of a father, nor the fear of death can remove him from his avowed amity. No son could be more officious and dutiful to a good father ; yet he lays down nature at the foot of grace, and for the preservation of his innocent rival for the kingdom, crosses the bloody designs of his own parent. Bp. II.

32-34. Even in this trying moment, Jonathan ventured to speak for his friend, urging justly that a man was to be judged by his acts and intentions, and those of David were laudable and pure. "Wherefore," he asked, "shall he be slain? What hath he done?" The answer was from the javelin of the infuriated king, which this time he cast at his own son. The next morning Jonathan goes to warn David. Kt.

35-40. *The arrow shot beyond David, and the lad dismissed.* In the same field where they had previously met, at the rock (marking in some way David's place of concealment) which received its name Ezel (verse 19) at this time—meaning *stone of separation*—at the hour agreed upon, Jonathan goes forth with his "artillery"—i.e., his bow and arrows, and a lad with him. As had been arranged, he shoots an arrow beyond the boy, to indicate the danger to David from the king's continued enmity. Then to make sure the intimation, and to show that the peril was imminent, he cries after the lad that the arrow is beyond him, and urges him to haste and tarry not, knowing that David would take the words in warning. On the boy's return to his master, Jonathan sent him at once back to Gibeah, with his weapons. B.

41, 42. The two friends once more met, but for a moment. There was not time for lengthened speech ; the danger was urgent. They were not unmanly tears which the two wept, "till David wept loudly." The parting must be brief—only just sufficient for Jonathan to remind his friend of their covenant of friendship in God, to whose care he now commended

him. Then Jonathan retraced his lonely way to the city, while David hastened on his flight southward to Nob. Only once again, and that in sadly altered circumstances, did these two noblest men in Israel meet. A. E.

They referred themselves to the covenant of friendship that was between them, both of them comforting themselves with that in this mournful separation. "*We have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, for ourselves and our heirs, that we and they will be faithful and kind to each other from generation to generation.*" Thus while we are at home in the body and absent from the Lord, this is our comfort, that he has *made with us an everlasting covenant.* H.

This is the culminating point in the mutual relations of the two friends who furnish the eternal type of the perfection of noble friendship ; and, moreover, in these last hours before their separation, all the threads of their destinies, henceforth so widely different, are secretly woven together. It is also at this point, consequently, that the clearest anticipation of the whole subsequent history already shines through. As Jonathan here foresees, David afterward obtains the kingdom ; and, in accordance with his oath to his friend, he afterward spares the descendants of Jonathan, and never loses an opportunity of showing them kindness. Ewald.

Only one other meeting, as brief as this, had the friends afterward. It was in the forest in the wilderness of Ziph (23 : 16), when Jonathan sought David, and strengthened his hand in God, saying, "Fear not, for my father shall not find thee, and thou shalt be King over Israel!" In all this period of Saul's persecution of David, but little reflection will suffice to magnify the trust and courage of Jonathan far beyond that of his hunted companion and friend. For David had the Divine assurance of safety, of an ultimate accession to the throne, and of a long and prosperous reign. Even Jonathan knew this, and affirmed it again and again for David's encouragement. But for himself, Jonathan had nothing in the future that could give encouragement or comfort ; he had everything to dishearten and break down his spirit. *He had absolutely nothing but faith in God to rest upon.* In himself, he presents to us a character of marvellous beauty and completeness. If at this time, during this brief interview, David "exceeded" in weeping, Jonathan greatly exceeded in faith and fortitude. He *had learned* the lesson of resting in God, and was David's teacher in this passive grace, as he had proved himself David's equal in aggressive courage and boldness. His

heart was tender as woman's, but he had all the elements of the grandest manhood beside, blending an undaunted daring with an invincible endurance. Now, and afterward to the end, his trial with Saul was far greater than David's. And how nobly was it endured! Not only did he know and cheerfully accept God's will, in appointing David to his place as heir to the throne, but he deliberately, from the same high principle, sacrificed the enjoyment of David's friendship to his own filial devotion and duty. He remained with his unhappy father, and gave to that doomed life all of cheer it had to the sad end. A royal soul indeed was his, loyal to his father, loyal to his friend, and above all loyal to God, until faith and fortitude were forever rewarded with a heavenly crown at his death.

And what shall we say of his friendship for David? How purely unselfish, utterly untainted by envy or jealousy under circumstances so fitted to awaken and intensify these natural human passions! Nay more than this, all his desire and his effort is to advance the interests of his friend upon the overthrow of his own. In all his conduct we see the crowning proof and exhibition of the most pure and perfect friendship that earth has known—a friendship embalmed in the thought and heart, and accepted as the only stainless human example by all true and lofty natures in the universal brotherhood of men. And the immortal beauty and power of friendship so illustrated had its root and basis in a supreme love to Jehovah, faith in his promise, and devotion to his will. This was its secret force and life, and here we read the central truth and teaching of this history. As all right feeling and action toward man flows naturally from right feeling toward God, so genuine friendship finds its best and highest fulfilment when it flows from supreme devotion to God. "The Lord be between me and thee" is the form of its covenant. The Lord be a party to our compact, establish, hallow, beautify, and enrich our fellowship, making it fruitful to our comfort and his glory, and making it eternal! And with this trustful expectation of precious return on earth, it looks for yet larger return hereafter. For it counts all earthly friendship and affection the Divinely appointed agencies for something nobler and more enduring, for infusing the love that passes beyond this life, for forming ties that death can only transfer to a purer sphere where they shall be perfected and established forever.

Even a higher example have we than this of Jonathan—the highest that is only human—in Jesus. He hallowed special friendships by his

own intimacy in the home of Bethany, and with the heart of John. But in Himself and all his gifts, his sacrifice, his righteousness, his kingdom, for every soul that will be befriended, Jesus is the Friend "closer than a brother," bestowing freely fully upon all, riches of grace and crowns of glory. Like Jonathan, yet far exceeding him, this Divine Son and Heir to a Kingdom enrobes his friends with his own spotless purity; pleads for them with his Father, but a loving, seeking Father; and sacrifices himself, a substitute, for their deliverance from a deserved death. Only a few hours before He suffered, he called his disciples "friends," and said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And now that He hath given this perfect proof of friendship and love—now that, with friendly hand and loving heart, he holds forth the priceless gifts of pardon, peace, and a blessed immortality—his single word to us is "Come unto me, respond with thy trust to my friendship, with thy devotion to my love!"

To these leading truths may well be added the clear suggestion forcibly impressed concerning *the choice of friends*. Next to the glad acceptance of Christ's friendship, this is most important in its bearing upon our character, experience, conduct, and destiny. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." No influence is so subtle, so pervasive, so moulds and modifies character, so radically affects our happiness and our acting, so mars or makes true success, so hinders or helps usefulness and high achievement, and so affects ultimate and eternal destiny, as that which flows from our chosen daily companionships. And the one consideration to be regarded, with and above all others, in the selection of a bosom friend in any human relation, is moral principle—or far better, for the *greatest* security and advantage, *Christian principle* in the heart, Christian devotion characterizing the plans and controlling the life. If *every* mind, in the most limited form and force of contact, modifies *every other*, how mighty, how momentous, the influence of a trusted admired soul upon the trusting loving one—an influence daily penetrating the whole nature with assimilating energy! Then, while holding friendship with Christ in supreme regard, apply the principles of this friendship—devotion to God and to good—as a test to the closest human friendships. And as God's best boon to you on earth, accept and rejoice in the fellowship of every friend whose spirit is one with yours in single-hearted consecration to Christ. B.

Section 245.

DAVID FLEES, FIRST TO AHIMELECH AT NOB, THEN TO ACHISH, KING OF GATH. UPON DISCOVERY HE GOES TO THE CAVE OF ADULLAM, AND GATHERS A BAND OF FOUR HUNDRED MEN.

1 SAMUEL 21 : 1-15 ; 22 : 1, 2.

21 1 THEN came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest : and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee ? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee : and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand ? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or whatsoever there is present.

Verses 4, 5. *Ahimelech's inquiry as to ritual cleanliness.*

6 So the priest gave him holy bread : for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD ; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword ? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod : if thou wilt take that, take it : for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that ; give it me.

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land ? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands ?

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad : wherefore then have ye brought him to me ? Do I lack mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence ? shall this fellow come into my house ?

22 1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam : and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him ; and he became captain over them : and there were with him about four hundred men.

David's *outlaw* life began by his flying to Nob. The site of Nob is unknown, but it must have been near Gibeah, probably between it and Jerusalem, where the high-priest and the tabernacle had been located after the destruction of Shiloh. From Nob he fled westward to Gath, one of the cities of the Philistines. Thereafter, years were spent in the wilderness of Judah, a wild desert tract of bare ravines, rocks, and caves. W. G. B.—He had yet another school to go through before his education for the leadership of God's people was complete—the school

of adversity. The faithful shepherd had become the prudent courtier : he must now become the vigilant, active, enduring outlaw. This phase of life helps still further to ripen his character, specially in two directions—chivalrous generosity and reliance upon God. His harp accompanies him here also, and no doubt shared many a sad hour in the caves of Adullam and Engedi. *Plummer.*

1. Samuel the prophet could not protect him, Jonathan the prince could not ; he therefore has recourse next to Ahimelech the priest. He fore-

sees he must now be an exile, and therefore comes to the tabernacle, to inquire of the Lord there, and to beg direction from him in the way both of duty and safety ; his case being difficult and dangerous. That this was his business, appears ch. 22 : 10, where it is said that *Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him* as he had done formerly. H.

2. This pretence of a private commission from the king was a mere invention, but his " appointing his servants to meet him at such and such a place " was probably the exact truth. In Mk. 2 : 26 our Lord speaks of those " who were with David, " and the " young men " are mentioned in verses 4, 5. R. P. S.—Here was a statement the very opposite of the truth ; spoken too to God's anointed high-priest, and in the very place consecrated to God's most solemn service ; everything about the speaker fitted to bring God to his mind, and to recall God's protection of him in time past ; yet the first thing he did on entering the sacred place was to utter a falsehood, prompted by distrust, prompted by the feeling that the pledged protection of the God of truth, before whose shrine he now stood, was not sufficient. W. G. B.—Hitherto hath David gone upright, now he begins to halt with the priest of God ; and, under pretence of Saul's employment, draws that favor from Ahimelech which shall afterward cost him his head. Bp. II.—It was needless for him thus to dissemble with the priest, for if he had told him the truth, he would have sheltered and relieved him as readily as Samuel did, and would have known the better how to advise him, and inquire of God for him. David fell thus foully through fear and cowardice, and both owing to the weakness of his faith. Had he trusted God aright, he would not have used such a sorry, sinful shift as this for his own preservation. It is written not for our imitation, but for our admonition. H.

Much is told in the Bible, even in connection with Old Testament saints, on which no comment is made, save that of the retribution which, in the course of God's providence, surely follows all wrong-doing. And here we challenge any instance of sin which is not followed by failure, sorrow, and punishment. It had been so in the case of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob ; and it was so in that of David, whose every attempt to screen himself by untruthfulness ended in failure and sorrow. Holy Scripture never conceals wrong-doing—least of all seeks to palliate it. But we go a step further. He who fails to recognize the gradual development of God's teaching, and regards the earlier periods in the history of God's kingdom as on exactly the same

level as the New Testament, not only most seriously mistakes fundamental facts and principles, but misses the entire meaning of the preparatory dispensation. The Old Testament never places truth, right, or duty on any *lower* basis than the New. But while it does not lower, it does not unfold in all their fulness the principles which it lays down. Rather does it adapt the application of truths, the exposition of rights, and the unfolding of duties, to the varying capacities of each age and stage. And this from the necessity of the case, in highest wisdom, in greatest mercy, and in the interest of the truth itself. The principle : " When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, " applies to the relation between the Old and the New Testament standpoint, as well as to all spiritual and even intellectual progress. A. E.

6. There is no difficulty in supplying *bread* as the shewbread was the subject of the conversation. David's argument, therefore, is that both his attendants and their wallets were free from legal defilement, and that though their expedition was on some secular business, yet that at all events the bread would be secure from pollution. R. P. S.

9. **None like that.** David is low enough now, a fugitive with manifold straits and dangers in store. This sword reminds him how the Lord delivered him in his encounter with the giant. It calls up his old faith ; rebukes his unbelieving thoughts, and bids his fears be gone. He is assured the Lord will carry him through. *Johnstone.*

10. The next step which David took on leaving Nob, seems to us equally objectionable with his conduct there, and was equally the result of the unworthy fears which now oppressed his spirits. *He went over to the Philistines.* It could not be of God that this step was taken ; and it was thus a further manifestation of that *distrust* of the sufficiency of the Lord's protection, a confidence in which had been hitherto, and was to be hereafter, the crowning glory of his great career. By the good providence of God, David was spared—through what seemed at first a trial and a danger—from the tremendous perils of this position. *Kil.*

12-15. The depth of David's alarm and his ready resource are shown by his degrading trick of assumed madness—certainly the least heroic action of his life. What a picture of a furious madman is the description of his conduct when Achish's servants came to arrest him. Israelitish quickness gets the better of Philistine stupidity, as it had been used to do from Samson's

time onward, and the dull-witted king falls into the trap, and laughs away the suspicions with a clumsy joke at his servants' expense about more madmen being the last thing he was short of. A hasty flight from Philistine territory ended this episode. A. M.—We do not palliate anything in David's conduct at Nob or at Gath that was unbecoming a servant of God. But the Psalms come in well to prevent our doing David any injustice. All through this painful passage of his life—in his flight, his grief, his mortal peril—his heart was crying out for God. Not that God sanctioned any shift or subterfuge; but God heard him, and saved him out of all his distresses. D. F.

22 : 1. And now David was once more a fugitive—the twofold lesson which he might have learned being, that it needed no subterfuges to insure his safety, and that his calling for the present was within, not outside the land of Israel. A comparatively short distance—about ten miles—from Gath runs “the valley of the terebinth,” the scene of David's great combat with Goliath. The low hills south of this valley are literally burrowed by caves, some of them of very large dimensions. Here lay the ancient city of Adullam. In the largest of the caves close by David sought a hiding-place. A. E.—Recent research has very strongly confirmed the conjecture, previously founded on historical grounds alone, that here must be placed the Cave of Adullam. H. B. T.—Caverns, characteristic of all limestone districts, here exist in astonishing numbers. Machpelah, Makkedah, Adullam, Engedi, names inseparably connected with the lives, adventures, and deaths of Abraham, Joshua, David, and other Old Testament worthies, are all within the small circle of the territory of Judea. P. S.

He soon contrived to make his retreat known to his own family, the principal members of which came to him there. Here also a number of daring men of various characters flocked to him. Many went out of regard to his person; others because they expected to advance their eventual interests, or because their circumstances could be bettered under so successful and valiant a leader; or because they were immersed in debt, or dissatisfied with the state of affairs under Saul. By the adhesion of four hundred such men, David could stand on the defensive, and assume such a position as would engage the interest of the people in his person and movements, and prevent his claims, his services, and his wrongs from passing out of mind. *Kit.*

They were wild, rough soldiers, according to the picturesque description, “whose faces were

like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.” They were not freebooters, but seem to have acted as a kind of frontier-guard against southern Bedouins and western Philistines for the sheep-farmers of the border, whom Saul's government was too weak to protect. In this desultory warfare, and in eluding the pursuit of Saul, against whom it is to be observed David never employed any weapon but flight, several years were passed. The effect of such life on his spiritual nature was to deepen his unconditional dependence on God; by the alternations of heat and cold, fear and hope, danger and safety, to temper his soul and make it flexible, tough and bright as steel. It evolved the qualities of a leader of men; teaching him command and forbearance, promptitude and patience, valor and gentleness. It won for him a name as the defender of the nation, as Nabal's servant said of him and his men, “They were a wall unto us, both by night and by day” (1 S. 25 : 16). And it gathered round him a force of men devoted to him by the enthusiastic attachment bred from long years of common dangers, and the hearty friendships of many a march by day, and nightly encampment round the glimmering watchfires, beneath the lucid stars. A. M.

David never opposed or disturbed the government of Saul; never endeavored to excite a spirit of discontent, or entered into a conspiracy to dethrone him, or forcibly levied contributions on his subjects, or joined the enemies of his country to invade it; or even availed himself of opportunities offered, to seize his person, or destroy him; but, during his whole life, behaved with all the submission that became him, as a dutiful son-in-law to his father, and a good subject to his prince. *Chandler.*—This very period of his deepest sufferings becomes the decisive turning-point of his whole history, at which it enters upon a true upward course, thence to rise ever higher and higher; while his real destiny—viz., to rule, is now for the first time not only foreshadowed, but already begun, though only on the smallest scale; and the clearest proof that this actually is his destiny is found in the fact that he begins to work it out without consciously exerting himself to do so. *Ewald.*

Some of his heart-experiences during these days of exile and isolation appear in Ps. 57, the heading of which refers to his fleeing from Saul and finding his home in the cave. A lofty tone of exultation in God is the key-note of this Psalm—in striking contrast with the gloom and desolation of his external surroundings. Would

it not have been at once strange and inspiring to hear this fugitive exile praising God with the sweet tones of psaltery and harp in those deep glens and among the dark, damp caverns of Judah's mountains? But there is no place on this earth where the presence and consolations of God cannot waken joy in the souls that love and trust him. Verily this is the grandest moral sublimity—to rise above the depressing influence of the darkest surroundings and triumph in God only! It reminds us of Habakkuk, amid prospective scenes of famine and dire captivity, singing, "Though the fig-tree do not blossom . . . yet will I rejoice in the Lord;" and of Paul and Silas—their flesh still raw from the scourge—with probable death before them in the morning, yet singing praises to God from the depths of their dungeon. So the story of David in the cave of Adullam and among the

fastnesses of Judah's mountains is only half told without the help of his Ps. 57. To see the whole of a man, we need to see both his external surroundings and the uprising of his heart to God above all their depression and gloom. In this period of David's history we may locate also Psalms 55 and 58—the former opening to view the great deep of his heart-trials, yet not less, his perpetual resort to God in prayer for help, and his placid trust, evinced in sweetly casting his burden on the Lord. In the latter, his soul is keenly sensitive to the sharp injustice under which he suffers from men in power, whom he warns solemnly of their responsibility to the righteous Judge of all. These Psalms give us yet more of that inside view of character which so finely supplements and interprets the external facts of David's history. H. C.

Section 246.

DAVID'S PARENTS TAKEN TO MOAB. HE GOES TO THE FOREST OF HARETH. DOEG, AT SAUL'S COMMAND, SLAYS AHIMELECH, EIGHTY-FOUR PRIESTS, AND THE PEOPLE OF NOB. ABIATHAR ESCAPES TO DAVID, WHO SAVES KEILAH, AND DEPARTS TO ESCAPE SAUL'S PURSUITS.

1 SAMUEL 22 : 3-23 ; 23 : 1-13.

- 3 AND David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab : and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do
4 for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab : and they dwelt with him all the while
5 that David was in the hold. And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold ; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.
- 6 And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him : now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the height, with his spear in his hand, and all
7 his servants were standing about him. And Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites ; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards,
8 will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds ; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that
9 my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which stood by the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse com-
10 ing to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to call
11 Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob : and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And
12 he answered, Here I am, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast in-
13 quired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who among all thy servants is so faithful as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into thy council, and is honorable in thine house ?

15 Have I to-day begun to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute anything unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knoweth nothing
 16 of all this, less or more. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all
 17 thy father's house. And the king said unto the guard that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their
 18 hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew
 19 on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings,
 20 and oxen and asses and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And one of the sons of Ahimelech
 21 the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar told David
 22 that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death*
 23 of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: for with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

23 1 And they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and
 2 they rob the threshing-floors. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and
 3 save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how
 4 much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for
 5 I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he
 7 came down with an ephod in his hand. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a
 8 town that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to
 9 Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul devised mischief against
 10 him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O LORD, the God of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to de-
 11 stroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy
 12 servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee
 13 up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

3, 4. David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab. The position of this place is unknown, but as the word means a *watch-tower*, it was no doubt some beacon-hill in the highlands of Moab on the east of the Dead Sea, and probably in the mountains of Abarim or Pisgah. Here David placed his father and mother under the care of the king of Moab. They had fled from Bethlehem under the combined fear of Saul and the Philistines, but were too old to bear the fatigues of David's life. He therefore asks for a refuge for them with the king of Moab, probably on the ground that Jesse's grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabitess. But as Saul had waged war on Moab (ch. 14:47), the king was probably glad to help one who would keep Saul employed at home. R. P. S.

5. The prophet Gad from this time appears to have been a companion till the end of his reign (2 S. 24:11), and subsequently became David's biographer (1 Chron. 29:29). A. M.—**Abide not in the hold.** The future king must not remain in a foreign land, but in the face of all risk return to his own country, in order that by such exploits as the relief of Keilah he might gain reputation, and prepare his way to the throne. A. F. K.—Another object was, that they might not imagine he had fled on account of any crime, or had joined the enemies of Israel. He therefore sojourned in the forest of Hareth, in the wilderness of Judah. C. G. B.

6. We have seen the progress of David's troubles; now here we have the progress of Saul's wickedness. He seems to have laid aside

the thoughts of all other business, and to have devoted himself wholly to the pursuit of David. He heard, at length, that David *was discovered*, and hereupon he called all his servants about him. H. — We have here a vivid picture of a solemn conclave met to deliberate on affairs of state or to administer justice. The king sits in state under some venerable tamarisk ; his spear, the emblem of royalty, is in his hand ; his servants, still chiefly the men of his own tribe, stand round him. A. F. K.

7, 8. His speech is wholly personal and selfish. He appeals to them, not as Israelites, but as Benjamites, as if he had said : “ Will a Bethlehemite of the tribe of Judah do better for you than a man of your own tribe ? ” He appeals to their love of riches and of military station. “ How can the son of Jesse give more than myself ? ” He suspects even them of conspiracy, and has no deep confidence in their loyalty. By their selfish fears and their selfish interest, he appeals to them to tell him the extent of his son’s league with sedition against himself. He accuses Jonathan of having stirred up David, a mere servant, to lie in wait for the throne. There is not a syllable of high-toned passion for God and for God’s people and the maintenance of God’s kingly government. *Knox.*

9. Then answered Doeg. The title of Ps. 52 states that it was composed by David in reference to this occasion. Verses 1–4 describe such a character as we may well suppose Doeg to have been. His tongue was “ a false tongue,” because, though the facts he reported were true, he helped to confirm Saul in a false and cruel suspicion. It “ devised destruction,” and “ loved devouring words,” for his story was told with malicious intent and fatal result. A. F. K.

10–18. Saul is now in a mood for bloody vengeance upon somebody ! Just here Doeg the Edomite is on hand to put fuel to the fire of Saul’s rage, charging Ahimelech and the priests at Nob with conspiracy against Saul. Saul summons them all before him, and too infuriated to listen with the least candor to their defence, commands and witnesses their causeless murder, eighty-five priests in one day ; and only one, Abiathar, fortunately not with them at the hour of slaughter, escaped. From him David learned the sad tale. Thenceforward Abiathar the priest became David’s companion in tribulation, and his fast friend, till the rebellion of Adonijah. David’s Psalm on this occasion (Ps. 52) charges Doeg with unmitigated deceit and falsehood. H. C.

14–20. In answer to the charge of conspiracy, the priest Ahimelech protested his inno-

cence in language the truth of which could not have been mistaken by any impartial judge. But the case had been decided against the priesthood before it was heard. Yet, callous as Saul’s men-at arms were, not one of them would execute the sentence of death against the priests of Jehovah. It was left to the Edomite to carry out what his reckless malice had instigated. That day no fewer than eighty-five of the priests in actual ministry were murdered in cold blood. Not content with this, the king had “ the ban ” executed upon Nob. As if the priest city had been guilty of idolatry and rebellion against Jehovah, every living being, both man and beast, was cut down by the sword. Only one escaped the horrible slaughter of that day, Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who fled to David. A. E.

In the madness of his self-willed fury Saul wreaked upon an innocent city in his own kingdom the vengeance he had failed to execute upon a guilty heathen nation at God’s command (15 : 3). Thus the doom upon the house of Eli (2 : 31) received a fresh fulfilment. A. F. K. — Had Nob been a city of warriors that had resisted the king’s armies or harassed and exasperated them, it could not have had a more terrible doom. And had Saul never committed any other crime, this would have been enough to separate him from the Lord forever, and to bring down on him the horrors of the night at Endor and of the day that followed on Mount Gilboa. W. G. B. — From that day Saul was a doomed and ruined man. The atrocious massacre filled every human and religious mind with disgust and horror, and it made the priestly body throughout the whole land, and in all its departments, inveterately hostile. *Kit.*

Abiathar’s Escape to David.

Verses 20–23.

Possibly Abiathar had remained at Nob in charge of the Tabernacle, and got timely warning of the approach of Doeg’s ruffians. Henceforward he was the companion of David’s wanderings, and helped him by “ inquiring of the Lord ” for him. He held the office of high-priest till the close of David’s reign, when by some strange infatuation, after remaining faithful through Absalom’s rebellion, and “ being afflicted in all wherein David was afflicted,” he took part in Adonijah’s rebellion, and was in consequence deposed by Solomon. A. F. K.

Surely there is no sting so sharp in the conscience of an honorable man as the feeling that, for his own safety or interest, he has misled his

own friends, and unwittingly brought disaster on them. We can believe that David, on hearing what Abiathar told him, was bowed down with shame such as he never yet had needed to feel. D. F.

23 : 6. Abiathar, who had been left to keep the sanctuary, took the principal vestment of the high-priest, the ephod, with the breastplate, and Urim and Thummim annexed, and carried them to David. *Bp. Patrick.*—Thus one consequence of Saul's slaughter of the priests was that he deprived himself forever of the protection and counsel of God, the ephod and oracle being now transferred to David. *Jandler.*—Abiathar was virtually the high-priest, and the recognized official medium of ascertaining the will of the Lord. The presence of both the high-priest and Gad, the seer, with David, must have given great importance to his movements and position in the eyes of the people; and he was by no means unmindful of the advantages he thus possessed, for he consulted the sacred oracle as to all his movements, and implicitly followed the indications it afforded. *Kit.*

3-13. With this Divine sanction, he overbore the fears of his followers and fell upon the Philistines, who had plundered the threshing-floors of Keilah, and were besieging the city. Having utterly defeated the Philistines, and gained great booty from them in cattle, David established himself in Keilah. Here Saul imagined he had caught him, as in a trap; and David, learning from God, by means of the sacred ephod, that the men of Keilah would give him up, left the city, with his little band, now

amounting to six hundred men. P. S.—“The men of Keilah will certainly deliver you up,” is the answer of the oracle. This is intended to save David from an open conflict with the government. It is not by battle with Saul, and the spectacle of one Divinely anointed king warring with another that David is to be brought to the throne. With his six hundred, therefore, he quickly left Keilah. *Knox.*

13. The cowardly townspeople of Keilah had less gratitude than fear; and the king's banished son-in-law was too dangerous a guest, even though he was of their own tribe, and had delivered them from the enemy. Saul, who had not stirred from his moody seclusion to beat back invasion, summoned a hasty muster, in the hope of catching David in the little city, like a fox in his earth: and the cowardly citizens meditated saving their homes by surrendering their champion. David and his six hundred saved themselves by flight, “whithersoever they could go.” A. M.

That the men of Keilah, suffering from plundering bands of Philistines, should have sought help from David rather than from Saul indicates his standing before the people and the service rendered to the country by his band of armed men. It astonishes us that Keilah, saved by David, is so ungrateful as to consent to surrender him to the power of Saul. The fact gives us a new sense of the trials incident to this period of David's history. He owed his safety to the forewarnings of danger which he obtained from the Lord, at one time through the prophet Gad; at other times through the priests with the linen ephod. H. C.

Section 247.

IN THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH, JONATHAN SEEKS DAVID WITH WORDS OF HELP. THEIR PARTING COVENANT. SAUL SURROUNDS DAVID'S BAND IN THE WILDERNESS OF MAON. CALLED BACK TO REPEL A PHILISTINE RAID. DAVID AT ENGEDI.

1 SAMUEL 23 : 14-29.

14 AND David abode in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert?
 20 Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and
 21 our part shall be to deliver him up into the king's hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the
 22 LORD; for ye have had compassion on me. Go, I pray you, make yet more sure, and know
 and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he
 23 dealeth very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he
 hideth himself, and come ye again to me of a certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall
 come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah.
 24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness
 25 of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert. And Saul and his men went to seek him.
 And they told David: wherefore he came down to the rock, and abode in the wilderness of
 26 Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And
 Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain:
 and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David
 27 and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste
 28 thee, and come; for the Philistines have made a raid upon the land. So Saul returned from
 pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-
 29 hammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi.

14. And David abode in the wilderness. David's next resort was "the wilderness of Judah," the wild uncultivated tract lying between the mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea. His chief abode was "the mountain (perhaps the hill of Hachilah, verse 19) in the wilderness of Ziph," a district southeast of Hebron, where a rounded hill half way between Hebron and Carmel still bears the name *Tell Zif*. A. F. K.—The dreary desert extends between the Dead Sea and the Hebron Mountains. It is called Jeshimon, or "Solitude," in the Old Testament, and "wilderness of Judea" in the New. It is a plateau of white chalk, two thousand feet lower than the watershed, and terminated on the east by cliffs which rise vertically from the Dead Sea shore to a height of about two thousand feet. The scenery is barren and wild beyond all description. The chalky ridges are scored by innumerable torrents, and their narrow crests are separated by broad flat valleys. Peaks and knolls of fantastic forms rise suddenly from the swelling downs, and magnificent precipices of ruddy limestone stand up like fortress-walls above the sea. Not a tree nor a spring is visible in the waste, and only the desert partridge and the ibex are found ranging the solitude. It was in this pathless desert that David found refuge from Saul's persecution, and the same has been a place of retreat from the days of Christ to the present time. *Conder*.

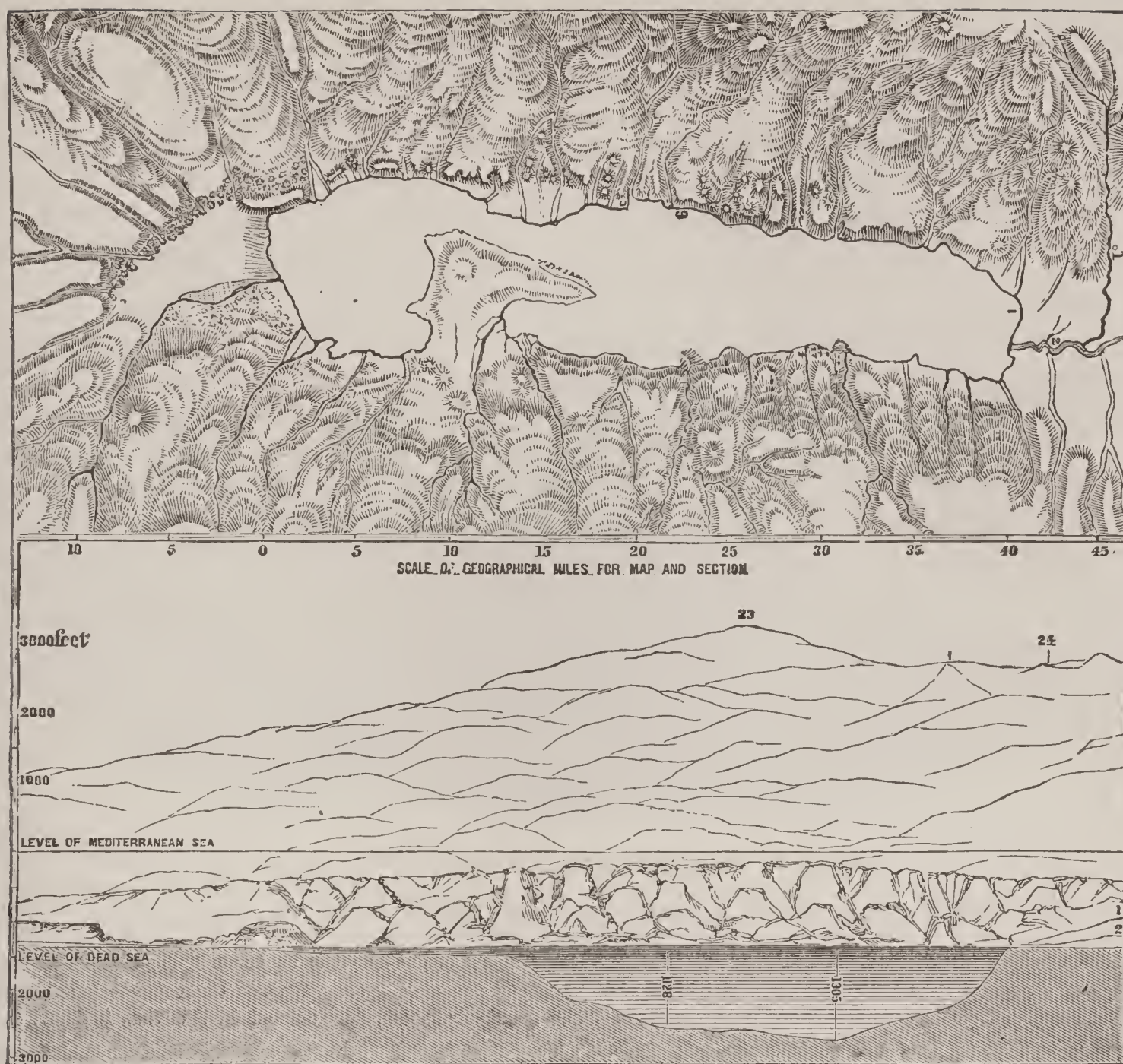
16-18. Final Parting of Jonathan and David. The conduct of Jonathan in this remarkable transaction is truly disinterested, generous, and great. He seeks him out in the wilderness, where his father was hunting him to destruction,

and "strengthened his hand in God," by comforting him under his cruel persecution, and assuring him of God's protection, of his future advancement to the throne, and of his own confidence in his (David's) future friendship. *Chandler*.—It were hard to determine which we ought most to admire on this occasion, the moderation, the friendship, the piety, or the unexampled generosity of Jonathan. To be able to resign a kingdom with that calmness, that frankness, that tender love and inviolable fidelity to his rival, and that steady submission to the will of God, seems to have something in it infinitely beyond all the other praises of heroism. *Delaney*.

Angels came and cheered the heart which men left to bear the unutterable burden. Following the example of Jonathan and of the angels, we each may do something to inspire with new faith and hope those who feel the pressure of care and toil for Christ; we may do it by our words of cheer, by our assured sympathy, by our fervent prayer, and by hearty, free co-operation in the enterprise which absorbs their energy. *Chapman*.

Jonathan never saw David again. Death broke their "fair companionship," and the elevation of David was bedewed with tender sorrow for his friend, "the comrade of his choice, the human-hearted man he loved." There is one Friend, only one, from whom we cannot be severed. He comes to us when we are in the wood, perplexed, embarrassed, cast down. Let us tell all our straits and misgivings to him. This Friend will never die. And not even our death can break the friendship or separate us from the love of Christ. D. F.

19. In the hill of Hachilah. This hill



MAP AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE DEAD SEA.

1. Jericho. 2. Ford of Jordan. 9. Engedi. 23. Hebron. 24. Bethlehem.

was situated on the south of the *desert*, or the district on which the plateau of Ziph looks down, "with white peaks and cones of chalk and deep narrow water-courses, terminated by the great pointed cliff of Ziz above Engedi, and by the precipices over the Dead Sea, two thousand feet high." Hachilah is not identified with any certainty. A. F. K.

24. While the Ziphites were conferring with Saul and gathering information David had moved about six miles to the south of Ziph, and was in the wilderness of Maon. R. P. S. — This was the district round the conical hill about seven miles south of Hebron still known as *Tell Maîn*. It is mentioned in Josh. 15 : 55 among the cities of Judah in the mountains. It was the home of Nabal (ch. 25 : 2). A. F. K.

The great wilderness of Judah stretches along the entire length of the Dead Sea, and reaches westward to the distance of ten or fifteen miles. Different portions of this wilderness have, in the

Scriptures, their separate names. On the south is "the wilderness of Maon," and just to the north of it is "the wilderness of Ziph," in both of which David was hunted by King Saul for his life. N. C. B.

27. The little band are surrounded and apparently lost. At the very moment when the trap is just going to close, a sudden messenger, "fiery red with haste," rushes into Saul's army with news of a formidable invasion : "Haste thee and come ; for the Philistines have spread themselves upon the land !" So the eager hand, ready to smite and crush, is plucked back ; and the hour of deepest distress is the hour of deliverance. A. M.

Mark the Restraint of God upon the Persecutor. Saul seemed to have every facility for gaining his object. No one disputed his will. Armed men by thousands followed him in pursuit of David ; and Saul knew how to lead men, and how to fight. He had spies to track out the



ENGEDI, AND THE WESTERN SHORE (SOUTHWARD) OF DEAD SEA.

The western range preserves for the greater part of its length a course hardly less regular than the eastern. A beach of varying width skirts the foot of the range. Above Engedi it consists mainly of the deltas of the torrents. The accompanying woodcut represents the view looking southward from the spring of *'Ain Jidy*, a point about 700 feet above the water. It is taken from a drawing by Mr. Tipping, and gives a good idea of the course of that portion of the western heights, and of their ordinary character. The portion actually represented in this view is described by Dr. Anderson as "varying from 1200 to 1500 feet in height, bold and steep."—*Dic. B.*

fugitive. The country was small, and the inhabitants, both at Keilah and at Ziph, showed their readiness to help the king. Yet he could never reach David to arrest or to smite him. D. F.

29. Strongholds of Engedi. Here the ground rises in high limestone hills, scooped into caves of surprising extent. Deep glens and ravines, running down to the Dead Sea, part the hills one from another, and render the capture of outlaws almost an impossibility. Want of water and the poorness of the burnt soil impart to the country a look of cheerless gloom. Here and there throughout the waste a spring bursts forth, and rushes down to the Dead Sea on the east, or wells and cisterns are found in the desert on the west. Of these springs the best known is that of Engedi, or the "Fountain of the Kid," so called from the wild goats which browsed on the scanty herbage of the rocks. Rushing forth in great volume from the limestone at a height of five hundred feet above the Dead Sea, its waters, tasting strongly of lime, leap from ledge to ledge till they reach the bottom of the hill. *Sime.*

Engedi is about the middle of the west shore of the lake. Here is a rich plain, half a mile square, sloping very gently from the base of the mountains to the water, and shut in on the north by a lofty promontory. About one mile up the western acclivity, and some four hundred feet above the plain, is the fountain of *'Ain Jidy*, from which the place gets its name. At a later period Engedi was the gathering-place of the Moabites and Ammonites who went up against Jerusalem, and fell in the valley of Berachah (2 Chron. 20 : 2). The vineyards of Engedi were celebrated by Solomon (Cant. 1 : 14), its balsam by Josephus, and its palms by Pliny. But vineyards no longer clothe the mountain-side, and neither palm-tree nor balsam is seen on the plain. *Dic. B.*

During his stay at Engedi, David was not a lawless bandit; among the hills the law of his God was in his heart; not wreaking on society his revenge, but flying to the spot where, if he could be most securely screened from invasion, he would also be farthest removed from the possibility of inflicting injury; and there he waited, nursing his great soul amid the solitudes. *Hood.*

Section 248.

SAUL IN THE CAVE AT ENGEDI. HIS COLLOQUY WITH DAVID, AND SEEMING REPENTANCE.

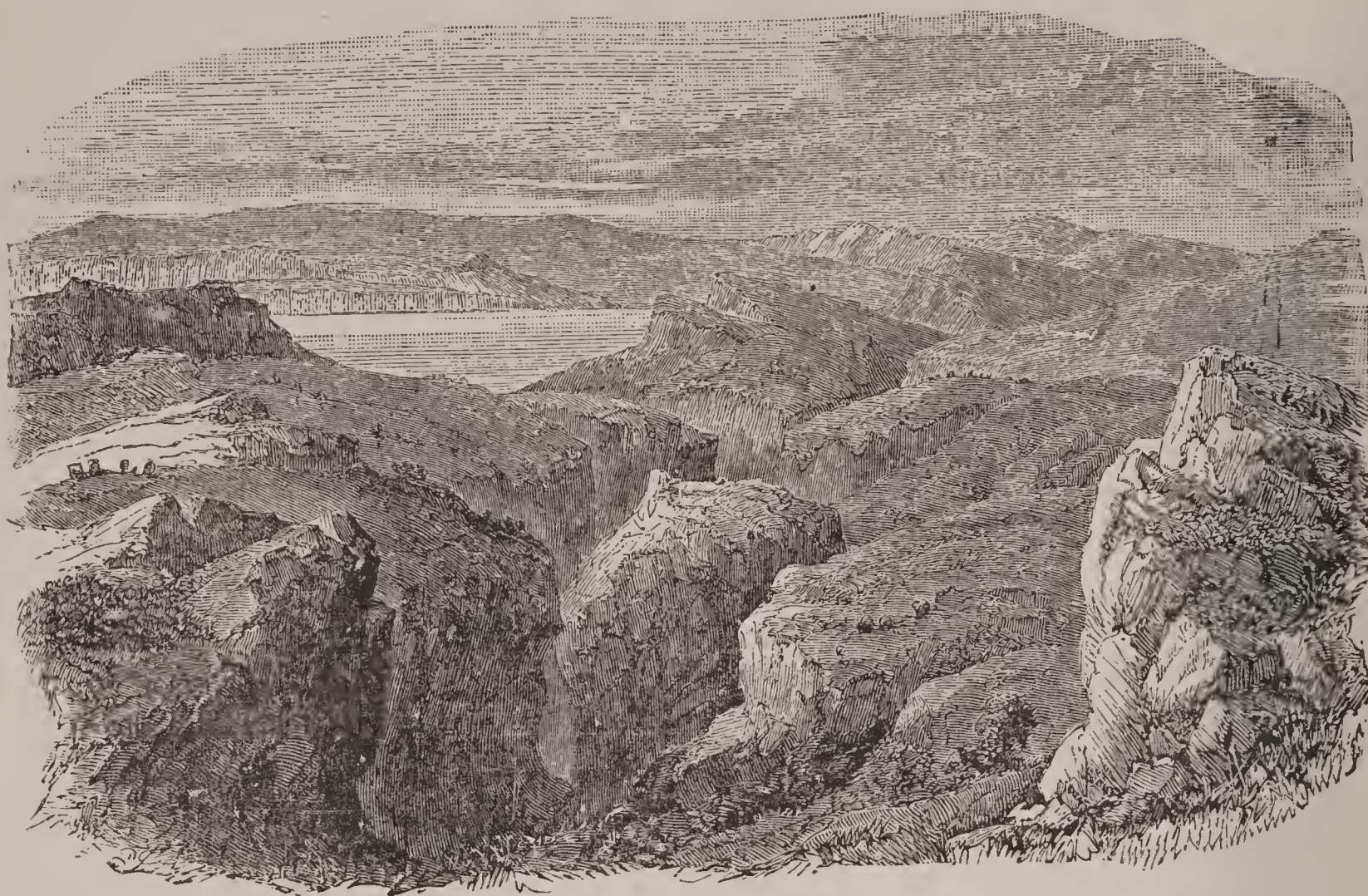
1 SAMUEL 24 : 1-22.

24 1 AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it
2 was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three
thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of
3 the wild goats. And he came to the sheepecotes by the way, where was a cave ; and Saul went
in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost parts of the cave.
4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold, the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Be-
hold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem
5 good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came
6 to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he
said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the LORD's
7 anointed, to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed. So David
checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul rose
8 up out of the cave, and went on his way. David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave,
and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David
9 bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said to Saul, Wherefore
10 hearkenest thou to men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day
thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave :
and some bade me kill thee : but *mine eye* spared thee ; and I said, I will not put forth mine
11 hand against my lord ; for he is the LORD's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the
skirt of thy robe in my hand : for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not,
know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not
12 sinned against thee, though thou huntest after my soul to take it. The LORD judge between
13 me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee : but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As
saith the proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness : but mine hand
14 shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou
15 pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. The LORD therefore be judge, and give sentence be-
16 tween me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. And it
came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said,
17 Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to
David, Thou art more righteous than I : for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have
18 rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well with
me : forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me up into thine hand, thou killedst me not.
19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee
20 good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know that thou shalt
21 surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now
therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt
22 not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went
home ; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

1, 2. When Saul had repulsed the Philistines, he resumed his designs against David, who had meanwhile retreated into the wilderness of Engedi, and abode "among rocks of the wild goats"—that is, among the high rocks and precipices, in which these animals delight. This wilderness is everywhere of limestone formation, with a large mixture of chalk and flint. The surface is broken into conical hills and ridges,

from two hundred to four hundred feet in height, and gradually sloping toward the Dead Sea. The country is full of caverns, which might well serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day. *Kt.*

3. During his search for David Saul seeks rest in a cavern. In the shadowed sides of an immense cave, unseen by Saul as he enters from



CLIFFS ABOVE ENGEDI.

the outside glare, David and his men were already sheltered. Saul's soldiers were scattered among the cliffs, which rise up one above another for many hundred feet, in a region which, because inaccessible to massed bodies of men, and only frequented by the sure-footed chamois, is here termed "the rocks of the wild goats." Alone, utterly unprotected, unconscious of the armed outlaws around him, the king sleeps.

4, 5. *David's men vehemently urge him to avail himself of this Providence, and avenge himself upon the sleeping king. They read this opportunity as a Providential intimation that God has delivered his enemy into his hand to be slain by him. David yields to their urgency so far as to cut off the edge of Saul's cloak, which lay beside the king. But even this seemingly harmless act is instantly regretted. B.—The cut of Saul's garment did not threaten any touch of the body: yet even the violence offered to a remote garment strikes the heart of David. Tender consciences are moved to regret at those actions which strong hearts pass over with a careless ease. It troubled not Saul to seek after the blood of a righteous servant. Bp. H.*

We can hardly think of a stronger temptation than that under which David now lay. There was the prospect of getting rid of the weary life he was leading, there was the prospect of wearing the crown and wielding the sceptre of Israel,

and there was the voice of his followers urging him to the deed, putting on it a sacred character by ascribing to it a Divine permission and appointment. And still further, there was the suddenness and unexpectedness of the opportunity. Nothing is more critical than a sudden opportunity of indulging an ardent passion; with scarcely a moment for deliberation, one is apt to be hurried blindly along, and at once to commit the deed. W. G. B.—How many in David's place would have leaped to the throne over the dead body of the king! The histories of ancient empires are dreary catalogues of such bloody usurpations. Goaded by Saul's cowardly attacks upon his life, David might naturally have found justification in the deed. But such conduct was impossible to David. He was too unselfish and too true to principle to advance himself by deeds of wrong. *Monday Club.*

6. *The cause of David's trouble of heart, after cutting off Saul's skirt. His conscience reproached him, because this act was an affront to Saul's kingly dignity, and so an injury to one anointed of the Lord. Not to Saul, but to God was the act an offence. David not only rejected the interpretation of his men, that God had put Saul in his power that he might slay him, but, with a noble and just intuition, inferred the contrary fact. He rightly thought that God had given him this golden opportunity of proving*

his loyalty to Him by respecting His anointed, by evincing the godlike principle of forbearance toward an evil-doer, and by practising the Divine precept, which he already understood, *Recompense to no man evil for evil, but overcome evil with good*. In the spirit of this sublime belief, he regretted even the slight indignity which he had hastily done to Saul, and "suffered not his servants to rise against Saul." He spared the false, abandoned, blood-guilty man, lying unconscious upon his stony bed, because he was God's anointed, God's man, to be dealt with by God alone!

And while this principle in his heart, this reverent reference to God of all judgment and vengeance concerning Saul, while this principle was the sole motive of David, there is a further, most instructive fact to be noted in connection with his conduct here, a fact which together with the principle suggests the chief teaching of the story. It is that the forbearance of David, and his restraint of the natural desire of his men for revenge, was the wisest policy on his own account. Had he proved disloyal, and permitted their disloyalty to Saul, what could he have looked for but that the seed of irreverence and disloyalty, so planted in their minds by his example, would bear fruit in connection with himself in his own after reign! Now, therefore, he has not only done right, acted upon a just and generous principle, but by his grand example has effectually taught them the same high principle, and trained them in the practice of a truer and nobler loyalty for the future. And, we may add, this effect of the wise behavior of David only illustrates, as does every other instance of right action, the common proverb, taken in a comprehensive sense, "Honesty"—i.e., all right acting—"is the best policy."

7-11. *David's brief interview with Saul, and his prudent and conclusive plea of innocence.* All unconscious of his imperilled life, and his deliverance through the magnanimous self-conquest of David, Saul awakes and goes forth from the cave, followed at a distance by David. Suddenly his steps are arrested by the voice of David calling "My lord the King!" As he turns about he sees David prostrating himself with a subject's wonted homage. And the plea which David instantly utters is in keeping with his outward reverence. In its general spirit we are impressed by a child-like ingenuousness, while there is mature wisdom in its method. "My father, see!" he says, as he holds the rent portion of Saul's robe toward him. "See, I have not heeded the voice of those with me bidding me kill thee, wherefore hearest thou men's

words against me? I have not sinned against thee, yet thou huntest my soul to take it." Thus, while conclusively proving his innocence, he impliedly relieves Saul from personal motive in this persecution, by intimating that others had misled him through false charges against David. But then he changes his tone of address to solemn appeal. B.

10. *The Lord delivered thee, very surprisingly, to-day into mine hand*; whence many a one would have gathered an intimation, that it was the will of God he should now give the determining blow to him whose neck lay so fair for it. When Saul had but a very small advantage against David, he cried out, *God has delivered him into my hand* (ch. 23 : 7), and resolved to make the best of that advantage; but David did not so. His counsellors and those about him had earnestly put him on to do it. *Some bade me kill thee*. He had blamed Saul for hearkening to men's words, and justly; "for," says he, "if I had done so, thou hadst not been alive now." H.

12-15. *David refers his cause to the judgment of Jehovah.* Assuring Saul once and again that his hand should never harm him, referring to himself (under figures of common use among Eastern nations and courts), as an insignificant man, whom Saul need not fear, and whose persecution was unworthy the King's dignity, David appeals his cause to the Lord's judgment, transfers to God all avenging work as only His, and commits himself to God as his deliverer from Saul's pursuit. The appeal is manly and just, as the plea was filial and wise. B.—The speech of David has so much natural eloquence, such warmth and persuasiveness, that it can be read by no one who has any feeling for the simple beauties of the Bible without emotion. The whole situation, moreover, has much of sublimity about it. We see David, standing on the summit of some rock in the wilderness, raising on high the trophy of his magnanimity, while addressing the melancholy Saul, whom he loved as a father, obeyed as king, and honored as the Lord's anointed, but who nevertheless hated him without reason, and followed him with unremitting energy to put him to death; using his opportunity of touching the heart of his enemy with words hurried, but expressive of his innermost feelings, and showing himself full of humility, oppressed by unutterable sorrows, bowed down by the feeling of his powerlessness, yet inspirited by the consciousness of a noble deed. Philipppson.

David's remonstrance is full of wounded affection surviving still, of conscious rectitude, of solemn devout appeal to the judgment of God.

He has no words of reproach for Saul, no weak upbraidings, no sullen anger, no repaying hate with hate. He almost pleads with the unhappy king, and yet there is nothing undignified or feeble in his tone. The whole is full of correspondences, often of verbal identity, with the psalms which we assign to this period. The calumnies which he so often complains of in these are the subject of his first words to Saul, whom he regards as having had his heart poisoned by lies: "Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold! David seeketh thy hurt." He asserts absolute innocence of anything that warranted the king's hostility, just as he does so decisively in the psalms. "There is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee." As in them he so often compares himself to some wild creature pursued like the goats in the cliffs of Engedi, so he tells Saul, "Thou huntest my life to take it." And his appeal from earth's slanders, and misconceptions, and cruelties, to the perfect tribunal of God, is couched in language, every clause of which may be found in his psalms. A. M.

Recent passages of this history have shown more of David's weakness than of his strength. But here he is again a hero. The fine points of his character shine out—his self-control, his magnanimity, and his reliance on the justice of God to vindicate his integrity. The situation strikes both the imagination and the heart. The young chief stands at the mouth of the cavern, holding up the proof of his generous forbearance, and protesting with picturesque eloquence against Saul's hot pursuit. The king amazed, ashamed, and subdued; the sternness fading from his face, the haughty anger in his eyes drowned in tears. So evil for the time was overcome by the good. D. F.

16-22. Saul was now convinced of David's integrity, when he did not take advantage of him in the cave, where he might have securely destroyed him. He was never so confounded with the shame of his own jealousy and malice, as by this act of magnanimity in David; though he had long known that David was anointed, and appointed by God to reign as king after him, yet he did not so thoroughly believe it, till this great instance of the temper of his mind, and of his relying on God's purpose so entirely, that he would not, by an act of his own, endeavor to bring that honor on himself sooner than the Divine wisdom intended it for him. *Clarendon.*—Saul could not withstand this instance of generosity in David, but melted and sunk under it; instead of lessening the merit

of it with an unrelenting heart, he "lifted up his voice, and wept," and with his tears acknowledged David's innocence, and his own guilt; and even prayed to God to reward that very person whom, but the moment before, he was pursuing to destruction. *Chandler.*

Out of that stone-like heart, for the moment melted under convictions he could not resist, gushed tears of genuine but remorseful regret. Out of that mouth that had for years uttered evil thoughts and malignant passions, that had commanded cruel persecution and merciless slaughter, now came confession of his own wrong and of David's justification; nay, more, prayer—a double prayer—first, that the Lord would reward good to David for his sparing act that day, and next, that David himself would spare the house of Saul, when God should establish him in the kingdom. With David's pledge and oath thus to spare, faithfully kept in after days, they separated, to meet again once more, under almost identical circumstances, and with similar results. Soon after that *final* meeting, Saul's hate and persecution ceased with his death.

In this whole history, with all his weakness and sin, David yet reveals himself as a man of profound piety. During these trials of outlawry and persecution, in the cave of Adullam, and in the haunts of crag and cavern, his soul was poured out to God in strains of elevated devotion, preserved for us in many a psalm. In this period of discipline he proved himself a man of God, by continually watching for and always obeying the Divine direction, by filial protection of his aged parents against the king's rage, by his greater heroism in twice sparing Saul than in slaying Goliath, and by his self-denial (1 Chron. 11:18) in pouring out as a libation to God the water of Bethlehem, obtained for his gratification at the possible cost of three valuable lives. And this period of severe training served to strengthen and mature his character, to give him a thorough knowledge of men, of their qualities, good and bad, and their needs, and so qualified him for his subsequent great achievement, in compacting and establishing the nation upon a permanent basis of strength and prosperity. B.

Though David's forbearance drew out a flood of sensibilities from the impetuous Saul, it in the upshot greatly aggravated his condemnation; for while it made quite palpable to him the fidelity of David, and though he knew—for he himself tells us so—of his destination to the throne of Israel, yet in the face of his own virtual promise to David and of the proofs which he had given of his loyalty, as well as in contra-

vention to the will of God, did he soon after resume the guilty attempt of taking away David's life. T. C.—Saul had only relented for a little while, not really repented of his malignant purpose. Softened feeling is one thing, repentance in mind and purpose another thing. Men

have twinges of compunction and gusts of admirable feeling, and so resolve to lead better lives. But there it ends. They mean well, but somehow cannot carry out their intention. It is for want of repentance toward God. D. F.

Section 249.

DEATH OF SAMUEL. STORY OF NABAL AND ABIGAIL

1 SAMUEL 25 : 1-44.

25 1 AND Samuel died ; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.
2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel ; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats : and he was shearing his sheep
3 in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal ; and the name of his wife Abigail : and the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance : but the man was churlish
4 and evil in his doings ; and he was of the house of Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness
5 that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent ten young men, and David said unto the
6 young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name : and thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace be both unto thee, and peace be to thine house,
7 and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers : thy shepherds have now been with us, and we did them no hurt, neither was there aught missing
8 unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will tell thee : wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes ; for we come in a good day : give, I pray
9 thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

Verses 10-31. *Upon Nabal's insolent reply, David starts to destroy him, but is met by Abigail, Nabal's wife, with generous gifts and well-reasoned deprecatory words.*

32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, which sent thee this day
33 to meet me : and blessed be thy wisdom, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day
34 from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, liveth, which hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou
35 hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light so much as one man child. So David received of her hand that which she had brought
36 him : and he said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house ; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person. And Abigail came to Nabal ; and, behold, he held a feast in
37 his house, like the feast of a king ; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken : wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. And it came
38 to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, that his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about
39 ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died. And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the
40 hand of Nabal, and hath kept back his servant from evil : and the evil-doing of Nabal hath the LORD returned upon his own head. And David sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her
41 to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake
42 unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, Behold, thine handmaid is a servant to
wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that followed her ; and she went after the messengers of David,

43 and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel ; and they became both of them
44 his wives. Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish,
which was of Gallim.

25 : 1. Death of Samuel. The death was like the life ; it was the gathering up of the feet into the bed, the calmest lying down to die ; the whole inspired record of it is the three solemn words, " And Samuel died." So giveth He His beloved rest. He is buried in his own house at Ramah : there he was born ; thither probably he withdrew at the desecration of Shiloh ; thence he judged Israel ; there he laid down and died. Around him were the lamentations of his people. It is written with expressness of emphasis, " All the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him and buried him." All had known him—the tall figure, mantle-clad, the long white locks, the reverend countenance—they should see them no more ; no more hear that voice of wise counsel and of brave rebuke. Another mighty one had passed away ; one who, like Moses and Joshua, had inaugurated a new dispensation ; he too was gone—the great prophet, the gifted seer, the upright judge, the inspired hero, he had passed away : the very heart of the nation sighed out its loving, weeping requiem. But who among them all mourned as that son of Jesse, on whose head he had at God's command poured the anointing oil, as he arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran ? Doubtless in those waste places he heard again in living memory the echoes of the prevailing cry of him who was so great among those that call upon the name of the Lord. Doubtless his own discipline was perfected in this new sorrow ; but he learned in losing Samuel to lean more simply and alone on Samuel's God. *Wilberforce.*

If David's visible deeds were greater and more dazzling than Samuel's, there can be no doubt that David's blaze of glory would have been impossible without Samuel's less conspicuous but far more influential career, and that all the greatness of which the following century boasts goes back to him as its real author. *Ewald.*—Coming at the close of a long line of warrior judges, with no great military exploits, no deeds of valor to recommend him, he had, single-handed, done what none of his predecessors had effected ;—he had brought those tribes of Israel, whom divisions from within and invasions from without had reduced well-nigh to a state of anarchy, beneath the restraints of law, mildly and equitably yet firmly and resolutely administered. He had united the nation and breathed throughout it something of a public, patriotic spirit. Samuel is one of the very few we read of as tak-

ing any prominent and important part in public affairs, on whose conduct throughout there rests not a single stain. He was a pure, disinterested, self-sacrificing patriot. He served or he governed, he took rule or he laid it down, as the interests of his country required. But his patriotism was based upon his piety. His love to Israel, strong as it was, flowed from and was subject to his love to Israel's God. Through the whole of his long and varied life, whether assisting as a child in the services of the sanctuary, or associated as a young man with Eli, and thrown into contact with his unworthy sons, or acting for thirty years and more, after Eli's death, as the last of the judges, guiding the country through a period of confusion and humiliation to a haven of order and of rest, or during the remainder of his days executing the office of the first of the prophets—everywhere and at all times the one guiding, controlling motive of Samuel's life was to do the will, to establish the dominion, to promote the glory of the Lord God of his fathers, the one Jehovah, God of heaven and earth. *Hanna.*

Moses had given the people their law, but Samuel in the schools of the prophets provided for them that education without which a written law was powerless, and called forth also and regulated that living energy in the prophetic order which, claiming an all but equal authority, modified and developed it, and continually increased its breadth and force, until the last prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, with supreme and Divine power re-enacted it as the religion of the whole world. And as neither his educational institutions nor the prophetic order, whose ordinary duties were closely connected with these schools, could have flourished without internal quietness and security, Samuel also established the Jewish monarchy, which was ideally also necessary, because the Messiah must not only be priest and prophet, but before all things a king. *R. P. S.*

The last representative of the old Judges, the first of the regular succession of Prophets, the inaugurator of the new monarchy, he occupied the most trying of all positions, to stand between the Old and the New, and to mediate successfully between them. He lived from one age into another, and threw his full sympathy—most difficult of achievements—into the wants of both periods. His sublime figure stands out in the pages of Holy Writ as a signal example

of Faith, of Patience, of Integrity, of Self-sacrifice, through a long and trying career, fulfilling the promise of those early days in Shiloh when "he grew on, and was in favor with the Lord and with man." A. F. K.—The close, and indeed the whole course of Samuel's public life, were in beautiful harmony with its commencement. He fulfilled all a fond and pious mother's hopes. He disappointed none. God was the centre around which he, as well as heaven, turned. In all his difficulties he repaired to God for counsel. The laws which governed his acts as a statesman and his decisions as a judge were those of God's Word; and, unlike this world's statesmen, never turned aside by considerations of expediency, of this or that present advantage, he steered his course by those principles of eternal truth and justice which give consistency to conduct. *Guthrie.*

Nabal and Abigail.

Nabal's home was in the city of Maon, and his possessions (or, his business) about a mile to the north at Carmel. Carmel was a city in the mountainous country of Judah, about seven miles S.S.E. of Hebron. The site is marked by the ruins of a large town bearing the name *Kurmul*. In its neighborhood much of David's outlaw life was spent. A. F. K.—There are three places whose identification is undoubted, within five miles of each other, in a line from south to north, a little east of Juttah, *Maon*, *Carmel*, and *Ziph*, now Ma'in, Kurmul, and Zif, all three immortalized by their connection with the romance of David's early history. Tell Ma'in or *Maon*, the possession of Caleb and the birth-place of Nabal, stands on a hill surrounded by waste pasture lands, where David and his men were bathing when the treacherous Ziphites brought Saul down upon them. Here ranged the three thousand sheep and the one thousand goats of Nabal. The hill is more elevated than the rest, but the ruins less distinct, though perforated by caves as numerous. Down the hill and up the next rise, we soon reach the extensive ruins of Kurmul, the *Carmel* where Nabal sheared his flocks, the native place of Abigail. Three or four miles north we examined the ruins of *Ziph*, as deserted as its neighbors, with very little left above ground, and not a vestige of the woods where David lurked: all is bare and desolate. *Tristram.*

3. Nabal was, according to his name, foolish; yet rich and mighty. Earthly possessions are not always accompanied with wit and grace. Even the line of faithful Caleb will afford an ill-conditioned Nabal. Virtue is not like unto

lands, inheritable. Abigail (which signifieth her father's joy) had sorrow enough to be matched with so unworthy a husband. If her father had meant she should have had joy in herself or in her life, he had not disposed her to a husband, though rich, yet wicked. It is like he married her to the wealth, not to the man. Many a child is cast away upon riches. Wealth in our matches should be as some grains or scruples in the balance, superadded to the gold of virtuous qualities, to weigh down the scales: when it is made the substance of the weight, and good qualities the appendance, there is but one earth poised with another; wheresoever it is done, it is a wonder if either the children prove not the parents' sorrow, or the parents theirs. *Bp. H.*

5-8. No envying of his prosperity—no grudging to him his abundance; but only the Christian wish that he might have God's blessing with it, and that it might all turn to good. It was the time of sheep-shearing, when the flocks were probably counted and the increase over last year ascertained; and by a fine old custom it was commonly the season of liberality and kindness. David gently reminded Nabal that he had come at this good time; then he hinted at the services which he and his followers had done him; but to show that he did not wish to press hard on him, he merely asked him to give what might come to his hand; though, as the anointed king of Israel, he might have assumed a more commanding title, he asked him to give it to "thy son, David." So modest an application deserved different treatment. W. G. B.

Thanks to the watchful care of David and his men, Nabal had not suffered the slightest loss (verses 15, 16); and the rich increase of his flocks crowned another year's prosperity. It was quite in the spirit of an Eastern chieftain in such circumstances, that David sent what would be a specially respectful embassy of ten of his men, with a cordial message of congratulation, in the expectation that at such a time some acknowledgment would be made to those who not only deserved, but must have sorely needed the assistance of a rich Judean proprietor. But Nabal received David's message with language the most insulting to an Oriental. A. E.—In point of fact, David had a right to a share of Nabal's profits. The harvest was in part David's harvest, for without David it never could have been reaped. The sheep were in part David's sheep, for without David not a sheep would have been spared by the marauders of the hills. Not a sheaf of corn was carried to Nabal's barn: nor a night passed in repose by Nabal's shep-

herds, but what told of the share of David in the saving of that sheaf, and the procurement of that repose (not the less real because it was past and unseen). The right which the soldier has by law to his pay was the right which David had by unwritten law ; a right resting on the fact that his services were indispensable for the harvest. *Robertson.*

13. The provocation was great, and David was not proof against it. Arming about four hundred of his men, he set out for Carmel, with the determination to right himself and take signal vengeance. Assuredly this was not the lesson which God had hitherto made David learn, nor that which He wished His anointed to teach to others. It was the zeal of the sons of Boanerges, not the meekness of Him who was David's great Antitype. And so God kept His servant from presumptuous sin. A. E.—*Is this thy voice, O David?* Can the man after God's own heart speak thus unadvisedly with his lips? Has he been so long in the school of affliction, where he should have learned patience, and yet so passionate? Is this he who, but the other day, spared him who sought his life, and yet now will not spare anything that belongs to him who had only put an affront upon his messengers? He who, at other times, used to be calm and considerate, is now put into such a heat by a few hard words, that nothing will atone for them but the blood of a whole family. Lord, what is man! What are the best of men, when God leaves them to themselves to try them, that they may know what is in their hearts! H.

14-27. Wicked Nabal hath in his house a wise and good servant, a prudent and worthy wife. That wise servant is careful to advertise his mistress of the danger ; his prudent mistress is careful to prevent it. The lives of all his family were now in hazard : she dares not commit this business to the fidelity of a messenger, but, forgetting her sex, puts herself into the errand. Her foot is not slow ; her hand is not empty. According to the offence, she frames her satisfaction. Her husband refused to give ; she brings a bountiful gift : her husband gave ill words ; she sweetens them with a meek and humble deprecation : her husband could say, "Who is David?" she falls at his feet : her husband dismisses David's men empty ; she brings her servants laden with provision ; as if it had been only meant to ease the repelled messengers of the carriage, not to scant them of the required benevolence. *Bp. H.*

28-31. Not content with entreating his forbearance, she acknowledged him as the champion who fought the battles of Jehovah, and as

the future leader of Israel. Deploring the persecution he suffered from Saul, she used those powerful and oft-quoted figures : "The soul of my lord shall be *bound in the bundle of life* with Jehovah thy God : and the souls of thine enemies, *them shall He sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.*" P. S.—The figure is taken from the practice of binding up valuables in a bag or bundle. Of course the immediate reference is only to the safe preservation of David's temporal life. To *sling out* is a vigorous metaphor to express total rejection. A. F. K.

She applauds David for the good service he had done against the common enemies of his country, the glory of which great achievements she hoped he would not stain by any personal revenge. *My lord fighteth the battles of the Lord* against the Philistines, and therefore he will leave it to God to fight his battles against those that affront him. "*Evil has not been found in thee all thy days*, and therefore thou wilt not begin now, nor do a thing which Saul will improve for the justifying of his malice against thee." She foretells the glorious issue of his present troubles. "Thou shalt abide under the special protection of the Divine Providence." The *bundle of life is with the Lord our God*, for in his hand our breath is, and our times. Those are safe, and may be easy, that have him for their Protector. She reserves this argument for the last, as a very powerful one with so good a man : That the less he indulged his passion, the more he consulted his peace and the repose of his own conscience ; that if he should avenge himself, it would afterward be a grief and an offence of heart to him ; that if he pass by the offence, it will afterward yield him unspeakable satisfaction that his wisdom and grace had got the better of his passion. H.

Abigail showed the vigor of her mind, the clearness of her judgment, and the strength of her faith in not fearing the displeasure of Nabal or the wrath of King Saul, but declaring her confident belief that the Lord would raise David to be ruler over Israel. On this ground she entreated him not to burden his conscience or sully his name with a hasty deed of blood. What a power of figurative expression those Eastern believers had ; and not least those devout women whose spirits were stirred by urgent occasions to ardent utterance—Deborah in her triumph, Hannah in her song, Abigail in her appeal! D. F.

32. Blessed be the Lord. David rightly recognizes that the intervention of Providence has saved him from a foolish and wicked revenge. There is no lack of faults in David's

life, and this outburst of passion was one of them ; but with all his faults he had that spirit of genuine repentance which makes it possible for men " To rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." A. F. K.—Revenge is certainly the most luxurious morsel that the devil can put into a sinner's mouth. But do we think that David could have found half the pleasure in the execution of his revenge that he expresses here upon the disappointment of it? Possibly it might have pleased him in the present heat and hurry of his rage, but must have displeased him infinitely more in the cool, sedate reflections of his mind. *South.*

33-35. If we blame David, as we must, for his heedless passion, we must not less admire the readiness with which he listens to the reasonable counsel of Abigail. With the ready instinct of a gracious heart he recognizes the hand of God in Abigail's coming,—this mercy had a heavenly origin ; and cordially praises Him for His restraining providence and restraining grace. He candidly admits that he had formed a very sinful purpose ; but he frankly abandons it, accepts her offering, and sends her away in peace. It is a mark of sincere and genuine godliness to be not less thankful for being kept from sinning than for being rescued from suffering.

38. It was not long before David had convincing proof that it is best to leave vengeance in the hands of God. " It came to pass, about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal that he died." W. G. B.—That God, which would not suffer David to right himself by his own sword, takes the quarrel of his servant into his own hand. David hath now his ends without sin, by the just execution of God, who would neither suffer him to sin in revenging, nor suffer his adversaries to sin unrevenged. Our loving God is more angry with the wrongs done to his servants, than themselves can be ; and knows how to punish that justly which we could not undertake without wronging God more than men have wronged us. He that saith, " Vengeance is mine, I will repay," repays oftentimes when we have forgiven and forgotten, and calls to reckoning after our discharges. It is dangerous offending any favorite of Him whose displeasure is everlasting. *Bp. H.*

42-44. Nor can we wonder, that on reviewing his own deliverance from spiritual danger, and the advice which had led to it, David should have wished to have her who had given it always by his side. In connection with this the sacred text also notes the union of David with Ahinoam of Jezreel, consequent probably on Saul's cruel and heartless separation between David and

Michal, whom he gave to one Phalti, or Phaltiel. Thus Saul himself had wilfully and recklessly severed the last ties which had bound David to him. A. E.

The glimpse of old-world ways in the story, the rough mirth of the shearers, the snarling crustiness of Nabal, David's fierce blaze of hot wrath, the tribute of the shepherds to the kindness and honor of the outlaws, the rustic procession, with the gracious lady last of all, the stately courtesy of the meeting, her calm, wise words—not flattery, yet full of predictions of prosperity most pleasant to hear from such lips ; not rebuke, yet setting in the strongest light how unworthy of God's anointed personal vengeance was ; not servile, but yet recognizing in delicate touches his absolute power over her ; not abject, and yet full of supplication,—the quick response of David's frank nature and susceptible heart, which makes him break into benedictions on her and her wisdom, and thankfulness that he had been kept back from " hurting thee," and the dramatic close in their happy union,—all make up one of the most charming of the many wonderful idyls of Scripture, all fragrant with the breath of love, and fresh with undying youth. The story lives—alas ! how much longer do words endure than the poor earthly affections which they record ! A. M.

This chapter, recording David's collision with Nabal, and showing us how David lost his temper, and became hot and impetuous and impatient in consequence of Nabal's treatment, comes in between the narrative of his two great victories over the spirit of revenge and impatience. It gives us a very emphatic lesson—how the servant of God may conquer in a great fight and yet be beaten in a small. The history of all spiritual warfare is full of such cases. In the presence of a great enemy, the utmost vigilance is maintained ; every effort is strained, every stimulus is applied. In the presence of a small foe, the spirit of confidence, the sense of security, is liable to leave every avenue unguarded, and to pave the way for signal defeat. Thus it is that men who have in them the spirit of martyrs, and who would brave a dungeon or death itself rather than renounce a testimony or falter in a duty, often suffer defeat under the most ordinary temptations of every-day life,—they lose their temper on the most trifling provocations ; almost without a figure, they are " crushed before the moth." W. G. B.

Section 250.

SAUL'S FINAL PURSUIT OF DAVID. DAVID ENTERS HIS CAMP BY NIGHT AND TAKES AWAY HIS SPEAR AND CRUSE. HIS LAST COLLOQUY WITH SAUL.

1 SAMUEL 26 : 1-25.

26 1 AND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in
2 the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert? Then Saul arose, and went down to the
wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the
3 wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, by
the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the
4 wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come of a certainty.
5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched : and David beheld the place
where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host : and Saul lay within the
6 place of the wagons, and the people pitched round about him. Then answered David and said
to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will
7 go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David
and Abishai came to the people by night : and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the
wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head : and Abner and the people lay round
8 about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thine hand
this day : now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke,
9 and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not : for
10 who can put forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As
the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him ; or his day shall come to die ; or he shall go down
11 into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should put forth mine hand against the LORD's
anointed : but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and
12 let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head ; and they gat
them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake : for they were all asleep ;
13 because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them. Then David went over to the
other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off ; a great space being between them :
14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not,
15 Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who are thou that criest to the king? And David
said to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then
hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy
16 the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are
worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, the LORD's anointed. And now,
17 see, where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head. And Saul knew
David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my
18 lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord pursue after his servant? for what have
19 I done? or what evil is in mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king
hear the words of his servant. If it be the LORD that hath stirred thee up against me, let him
accept an offering : but if it be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD ; for they
have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of the LORD, saying,
20 Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the pres-
ence of the LORD : for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a
21 partridge in the mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned : return, my son David : for I
will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day : behold, I have
22 played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the spear,
23 O king ! let then one of the young men come over and fetch it. And the LORD shall render to
every man his righteousness and his faithfulness : forasmuch as the LORD delivered thee into
24 my hand to-day, and I would not put forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed. And,
behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the
25 eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to David,
Blessed be thou, my son David : thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. So
David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

David's temptation to disloyalty toward Saul and toward God, with the people's sympathy on his side against the king, and especially the opportunity twice given to take the king's life, he steadfastly resists. In this whole period of Providential discipline, through which he ultimately acquired the passive graces of fortitude and patient waiting upon God, we find the active virtues of fidelity to Saul and obedience to God in unwavering exercise and control. And in recording the weak points of David's character side by side with the strong ones, be it noted in passing, this narrative shows the same evidence of truthfulness we have often observed in the record by the Evangelists of their own weaknesses. *B.*

2. Then Saul arose. The inconstancy, falseness, and implacable rage of this prince, are really inconceivable. Not long before he had been indebted to David for his life, had acknowledged his own error, and made David swear he would be kind to his posterity: yet here he openly declares himself his enemy again, and seeks to take his life. *Patrick.*

After an uncertain interval of time, during which occurred the affair with Nabal, we find the king again upon the track of David, in a different part of the wild regions toward the Dead Sea. This relapse of Saul into his old inveteracy, this forgetfulness of that noble forbearance which had once so deeply impressed him, would have thrown many men—even right-minded men, off their guard of patience and moderation. It was a hard test, but David stood it. He lost not one jot of heart or hope; and would not consent that the wrong of Saul should make him wrong also. An opportunity was again afforded him of showing the invincible truth of his character, and his immeasurable superiority to the man who hunted his life through the mountains. *Kil.*

7. At all the encampments which we passed the sheikh's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom when a party halt to rest that the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated. So Saul, when he lay sleeping, had his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster, and Abner and the people lay round about him. *Thompson.*—Our Arab's preparation for the night recalled a scene in Saul's mad pursuit of David. First our guard built a slight semicircular stone wall to protect himself from the wind. His long spear was stuck in the ground at his head; his saddle served for "bolster;" his horse was picketed near by, and a "cruse of water" was within his

reach. Thus, wrapped in his mantle, he slept as Saul had slept on these hills, farther to the south. As you journey through Palestine the people and the land constantly reproduce Bible life and bear witness to the truthfulness of Bible story. *Dulles.*

10. And David said, Nay, but Jehovah shall strike him. The person of the anointed king is inviolable: his life is in Jehovah's hands. It may be ended either by a sudden stroke, such as that which smote Nabal; or by a natural death; or by death in battle; but violent hands may not be laid upon him with impunity. *A. F. K.*—The discipline of David's spirit at this time must have been exceedingly admirable. The purpose of God in all these trials to train him to self-government was beautifully fulfilled. Not only was he enabled to restrain himself, but also to restrain his ardent and impetuous followers. He would neither strike his artless enemy, nor suffer another to strike him. The first time he spared Saul, it might be with a lingering hope that his forbearance would turn Saul's heart, and disarm his hostility. On the second occasion, he could have no hope of the kind. It was pure regard to sacred duty that swayed him. He acted in utter contempt of all that was personal and selfish, and in deepest reverence for what was holy and Divine. *W. G. B.*

12. How invincible is the charity and loyalty of an honest heart! The same hand that spared Saul in the cave spares him sleeping in the field: the same hand that cut away the lap of his master's garment carried away his spear; that spear, which might as well have carried away the life of the owner, is only borne away for a proof of the fidelity of the bearer. *Bp. H.*

13-16. A great space being between them. At Engedi Saul was alone, and had placed himself in David's power; he therefore had followed him closely. Here Saul had his army round him, and David had entered his camp by stealth. It is not, therefore, till he had placed an ample interval between them that he calls to Abner, and asks in derision, Art thou not a man? *R. P. S.*—What a strange sensation must have run through the camp as David's voice rang out these cutting taunts from the top of the hill! But David was perfectly safe, and there are thousands of ravines where the whole scene could be enacted, every word be heard, and yet the speaker be quite beyond the reach of his enemies. *Thompson.*

19. In David's speech we read—"If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept

an offering.' David's meaning is—If thou hast provoked the Lord to give thee up to such madness of passion, repent and conciliate him with sacrifice and offering. H. C.—His sense of the wrong done to him is very keen, and his repudiation of the accusations brought against him becomingly warm and indignant. His faith does not require him to lie passive under injurious imputations. He will do all that becomes him to clear his character, but he will not be over-anxious respecting the result, knowing that his character is in God's keeping, and that a great day of unclouding is coming, when his righteousness shall in these matters be made manifest to men and angels. *Kil.*

21. Saul's answer here is very different from that in ch. 24 : 17-21, where the main idea was wonder that David should with such magnanimity spare the life of an enemy so manifestly delivered into his hand. Here a sense of vexation seems uppermost, and of annoyance, not merely because his purpose was frustrated, but because his own military arrangements had been so unsoldier-like. R. P. S.—Saul was ready again to confess his fault and to promise abandonment of his unnatural and unjust pursuit of David, but we hear nothing of tears. There is a ring of vexation rather than of contrition about his confession : "I have sinned. I have played the fool." Cases of superficial repentance leading to relapse and deterioration are not rare. Emotion fades away ; and some temptation is sure to come, as the Ziphites came to Saul and induced him to resume what he had renounced. D. F.

23. The Lord shall render. In 24 : 19 the equivalent of these words is put into Saul's mouth. David is not sounding his own praises, but as before (24 : 12) declaring his confidence that God will eventually recompense him for his upright and loyal behavior. A. F. K.

25. Again the hard heart melted, and again the king himself is compelled to prophesy good things for David : "Blessed be thou, my son David. Thou shalt do great things, and shalt still prevail." With this prophecy, the king sounded his last retreat. The Philistines would next call him out to defeat and death. *Knox.*—David could have destroyed Saul, but he would not ; Saul would have destroyed David, but he could not ; he was under the dominion of a depraved will, even when he expressed his determination to abandon his evil designs, and seemed to himself and others sincerely penitent. B. D.—He turned back from the pursuit, as he had done before, but he did not reinstate his son-in-law in the honor to

which he was entitled, or relieve him of the harassing sense of insecurity. It is one thing to recognize and applaud what is good, another thing to do it. How many admire great and generous characters in history, poetry, and romance, and yet themselves remain small-minded and ungenerous ! How many applaud good men and kind actions, and yet continue in their own bad habits and selfish lines of conduct, without any vigorous effort to follow what they praise ! After all, a man is himself, and not another, and as his heart is so will his action be. Unless the tree be made good from the root, it is vain to expect good fruit on its branches. D. F.

Saul would not be controlled or dictated to—not even by God. He would not bow his spirit to the heavenly yoke ; he would not have Jehovah to rule over him. Like all the ungoverned children of impulse, he was not only the sport, he was the prey of his own passions—of wounded pride, of disappointed vanity, of gnawing envy, of bitter and vengeful hate. These were the avenging furies into whose hands the punishment of his high offence was committed, and well did they do their work. Let the misery that Saul brought thus upon himself remind us what a magazine of self-torture every human spirit contains. There is not the smallest nerve of the human body that cannot be made to quiver all through with agony. And there is not a single disposition or affection of the human spirit—no, not even the best and purest—that in some way or other, by overstraining or misdirection, by disappointment and laceration, may not become a source of inward misery ; while lying in the dark corners of the soul, brooding, sleeping, or kept in check, there lie those vulture-passions, pride and lust, and ambition and covetousness, and jealousy and malice, any one of which, if once let fully loose, once suffered to rage and riot, could make of any heart a hell of wildest disorder and ever-dripping woe. Think, then, of Saul, as originally a man not worse than others,—morally, perhaps, as well as physically, above the level of his tribe and times. Think of the amount of mischief that the yielding to the passion that he cherished toward David inflicted upon him : how it blinded him, how it hardened him, how it stifled all the kindly affections of his nature, how it quenched even parental love, how it dyed his hands in the blood of the priesthood, how, linking itself with all the wilfulness and recklessness and ungodliness of his nature, it lashed him on and on, as an avenging fury, itself its punishment : and then say what capaci-

ties of self-torture lie folded up within every human soul. *Hanna.*

Saul's history shows how one man "played the fool and erred exceedingly;" that self-will is the root of disobedience, self-seeking and God-rejecting are its fruits; that disobedience, in the face of instruction and warning, ends in the utter forfeiture of God's favor. It shows that God will have obedience before all other things. For it He accepts no substitute, not even proffered worship. It shows that there is a Satan, "an evil spirit" permitted of God to present evil motive—in this sense only "from the Lord"—through which motive he actuates those that are hopelessly evil. Furthermore we learn that every human life is profoundly influenced by the Spirit of God or this "evil spirit," and that every human heart has, *in this way of motive and appeal*, a prompter to good and to evil. It shows that sin inevitably produces a deteriora-

tion of character and faculty, ceasing not until the man becomes a fiend; and that its course is downward with accelerating speed until the man is swept into the abyss of the second death!

David's history thus far shows the high advantages of wisdom blended with faith, in securing the presence and help of God, and, as well, the favor of man. And it shows that where faith is balanced by wisdom, prosperity may be enjoyed without self-elation or pride. It reveals the might of a self-ruled spirit, in banishing resentment under the severest provocation, and, with opportunity of avenging sore wrong, twice overcoming evil with good. It shows that patient waiting and looking to know the will of God is always rewarded; that the knowledge is given, and the way of daily walking is made clear. And it shows that in the shaping of the believer's life by the joint working of God's providence and spirit, the believer's prayers are all answered in the best way, and with the best results. B.

Section 251.

DAVID FLEES AGAIN TO THE PHILISTINE KING, WHO GIVES HIM ZIKLAG, WHERE HE ABIDES FOR SIXTEEN MONTHS. HE RAIDS THE AMALEKITES AND OTHERS, AND DECEIVES ACHISH. HE IS RELEASED FROM MILITARY SERVICE AGAINST SAUL BY THE PROTEST OF THE PHILISTINE PRINCES.

1 SAMUEL 27 : 1-12 ; 28 : 1, 2 ; 29 : 2-11.

27 1 AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul : there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel : so shall I escape out of his
2 hand. And David arose, and passed over, he and the six hundred men that were with him,
3 unto Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreel-
4 itess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath : and he sought no more again for him.

5 And David said unto Achish, If now I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there : for why should thy servant
6 dwell in the royal city with thee ? Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day : wherefore Ziklag
7 pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. And the number of the days that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

Verses 8-12. *David makes a destructive raid upon the Geshurites, Girzites, and Amalekites, but gives a false account to Achish.*

28 1 And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou
2 shalt go out with me in the host, thou and thy men. And David said to Achish, Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head forever.

29 2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands : and David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.

Verses 3-8. *At the demand of the Philistine lords, Achish dismisses David with kindly words of warm approval.*

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God : notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with the servants of thy lord that are come with thee : and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. 11 So David rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Notwithstanding Saul's seeming contrition and request for David's kindness to his family, David's faith in Saul's word was utterly broken, and his fortitude and faith in God again yielded to despondency because of his outcast, fugitive condition. Then followed the invariable consequence of a failing faith, lapse into self-trust, and the following of one's own plans, in practical disbelief of God's care and disregard of His purposes. And so David sinned, in seeking that protection from Israel's inveterate foes, the Philistines, which he should have continued to find in God alone ; and during the eighteen months that he abode in the Philistine city of Ziklag, until Saul's death, his false position required repeated deceits and falsehoods. But God protected him and forbore with him, for he saw the truth that still was in his heart, and out of the sad infirmity and sin which for a time overlaid and deadened that truth, He wrought a conviction and contrition in David's soul, by which his future was made better and greater, and the lessons of his life, shown in his after history and taught in his Psalms, have become far more effective and blessed. B.

I. In his collision with Nabal we saw David fail in what seemed one of his strong points—the very spirit of self-control which he had exercised so remarkably toward Saul ; and now we see him fail in another of his strong points—the spirit of trust toward God. Could anything show more clearly that even the most eminent graces of the saints spring from no native fountain of goodness within them, but depend on the continuance of their vital fellowship with Him of whom the Psalmist said, “ All my springs are in Thee ” ? Carelessness and prayerlessness interrupt that fellowship ; the supply of daily strength ceases to come ; temptation arises, and they become weak like other men. “ Abide in Me,” said our Lord, with special emphasis on the need of permanence in the relation. W. G. B.

David's faith failed, and he was afraid. There is no mention of his having prayed, or consulted God through the priest, as at other times. In his unworthy fear he took counsel with himself,

and “ said in his heart ” that he would surely perish. He fails at a strong point. The real clew to his misconduct lies here—that he lost hold of God and fell through unbelief, allowed himself to doubt whether God would or could keep him in some strait, and took to trusting and keeping himself. So he fell into unworthy company, or betook himself to unworthy devices ; and the end is what you see—dishonesty, duplicity, prevarication. David's cries to God in the Psalms, and his way of repeating to himself that God was on his side, and was able to defend and deliver him, indicate not obscurely his inward struggle. If he had felt no fear he would not have thought of writing, “ I will not fear what man can do to me.” If he had known no failure of faith he would not have said so much as he has of crying after God and putting his trust in him. D. F.

How many evident experiments had David of God's deliverances ; how certain and clear predictions of his future kingdom ; how infallible an earnest was the holy oil wherewith he was anointed, of the crown of Israel ? And yet David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul : the best faith is but like the twilight, mixed with some degrees of darkness and infidelity ; we do utterly misreckon the greatest earthly holiness, if we exempt it from infirmities ; it is not long since David told Saul that those wicked enemies of his, which cast him out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, did as good as bid him go serve other gods ; yet now is he gone from the inheritance of God into the land of the Philistines ; that Saul might seek him no more, he hides himself out of the lists of the church, where a good man would not look for him. Bp. H.

God had appointed him to set up his standard in the land of Judah (ch. 22 : 5) ; there God had wonderfully preserved him, and employed him sometimes for the good of his country ; why then should he think of deserting his post ? How could he expect the protection of the God of Israel, if he went out of the borders of the land of Israel ? H.—David was just as secure

in Israel as in Gath ; and this he might have known from repeated providential deliverances. Great evils came upon David, and he was led into sins and sacrifices, because in a hasty moment of discouragement he lost his confidence in God, and turned aside from the plain path of duty. By that one rash resolution, formed in a moment of despondency, he was led into falsehood, and cruelty, and the sacrifice of religious principles ; and in consequence of it his family were carried into captivity, and his own life endangered. He could hardly have suffered more if he had remained in Judea under Saul's persecutions ; and certainly he would not have been led into so many sins. Had he continued there, he might indeed have been driven from place to place, but his life would have been secure ; and, moreover, he would have been in the midst of his countrymen of the same religion, and perhaps had he been there at the time of Saul's death, his presence might have prevented the evils of a disputed succession, and the long civil wars that ensued. But he became discouraged ; and then, not satisfied with the Lord's way of taking care of him, he must mark out some better plan of his own. *W. Lewis.*

Nevertheless, David entered the land of the Philistines in a far different attitude from that in which he had before appeared there. The inveterate hatred of Saul, now so well known, was his recommendation, and no distrust could be entertained of a man who fled for his life to the enemies of his country—exasperated by wrongs, and willing, it might be supposed, to avenge them. Won by these considerations, and by the assurance that this able leader and valiant troop were withdrawn from the defensive force of Israel, and added to the strength of the Philistines—David found a most friendly reception from the king of Gath. *Kit.*—Achish bade him welcome, partly out of generosity, being proud of entertaining so brave a man ; partly out of policy, hoping to engage him forever to his service, and that his example would invite many more to desert, and come over to him. No doubt he gave David a solemn promise of protection, which he could rely upon, when he could not trust Saul's promises. *H.*

6. He brings his wives and families into the royal city (verse 3), which gives the Philistine king security that these Hebrews are his own subjects. David gains favor by his demeanor and the demeanor of his people in the royal city. His request for a town of his own—indicative of his spirit and foresight—is granted. *Knox.*—Ziklag was assigned to David. It lay near the southern border of the Philistines,

close to the southern desert. At Ziklag he was away from the eye of the lords of the Philistines that had always viewed him with such jealousy ; he was far away from the still greater jealousy of Saul ; and with Geshurites, and Girzites, and Amalekites in his neighborhood, the natural enemies of his country, he had opportunities of using his troop so as at once to improve their discipline and promote the welfare of his native land. *W. G. B.*—As a matter of fact, David in this city laid the foundation of all his kingdom. Here he could already rule with greater freedom and independence, collect fugitives and deserters around him in larger and larger numbers, send or receive embassies like a prince, and, as a ruler over soldiers and over peaceable citizens, rehearse, on a small scale, those arts by which he afterward acquired and maintained his great kingdom. *Ewald.*

8, 9. The narrator means to say that these three Bedouin tribes were the aboriginal inhabitants of the northwestern portion of the desert between Egypt and South Palestine. *R. P. S.*—No sooner is he free from Saul's sword, than he begins an offensive war against the Amalekites, Girzites, Geshurites. He knew these nations branded by God to destruction : neither could his increasing army be maintained with a little : by one act, therefore, he both revenges for God and provides for his host. Had it not been for that old quarrel which God had with this people, David could not be excused from a bloody cruelty in killing whole countries only for the benefit of the spoil ; now, his soldiers were at once God's executioners and their own foragers. *Bp. H.*

10. He hid it from Achish, with an equivocation. Being asked which way he had made his sally, he answered, *Against the south of Judah.* It was true, he had invaded those countries that lay south of Judah, but he made Achish believe he had invaded those that lay south in Judah, the Ziphites, for example, that had once and again betrayed him ; so Achish understood him, and from thence inferred that he *had made his people Israel to abhor him*, and so riveted himself in the interest of Achish. The fidelity of Achish to him, his good opinion of him and the confidence he put in him, aggravate his sin in deceiving him thus ; which, with some other such instances, David seems penitently to reflect upon, when he prays, *Remove from me the way of lying.* *H.*—He meant to deceive him under whom he lived and by whom he was trusted. If Achish were a Philistine, yet he was David's friend ; and if he had been neither, it had not become David to be false. The infirmities of God's chil-

dren never appear but in their extremities. It is hard for the best man to say how far he will be tempted. If a man will put himself among Philistines, he cannot promise to come forth innocent. *Bp. H.*

28 : 1, 2. This chapter opens with preparations among the Philistine lords for vigorous war upon Israel. Achish thinks highly of David as a warrior, and assures him that he and his men must go. David's reply is skilfully indefinite : " Surely thou shalt see what thy servant can do." Achish is so much pleased that he would fain make David and his band his own body-guard. So Achish retained all confidence in David and was quite ready to take him and his band into the pending invasion of Israel—a fact which made the condition of David intensely critical. Shall he break friendship with Achish, or shall he go with him and fight against Saul and Israel? Unless God interpose to help in this dilemma, who can? *H. C.*—David could not refuse the confidence he had sought from Achish. He could not renounce the allegiance he had so recently pledged. If he should disobey the king of Gath, he could look for nothing but indignant reproach and a traitor's doom. If he should obey him, he would, in course of a few days, be fighting against his own nation, and bringing them again under the yoke of the Philistines; and this would be worse than death. Perplexed and reluctant, he marched in the rear of the invading army, suffering inwardly all the more that he was obliged to hide his unwillingness, and to affect a zeal against Israel which his heart disowned.

3-8. How to escape from the dilemma in which he was caught baffled even David's ready mind; but the Lord always knows how to deliver. He does so through means and agencies that are natural; in this case through the very natural jealousy of the Philistine lords, and their proper military prudence, objecting to have the person of the king intrusted to the keeping of a band of Israelites, and that band commanded by a skilful and daring captain in the rear of their army, where their defection would be most dangerous. *D. F.*—What peculiar providence was here, that David should be delivered out of his great strait, of either being false to his patron, or fighting against Saul and his own nation! *Bp. Wilson.*

9, 10. The only bright spot in this transaction was the very cordial testimony borne by Achish to the faultless way in which David had uniformly served him. It is seldom indeed that such language as Achish employed can be used of any servant—" I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God." Achish must have been struck with the utter absence of treachery and of all self-seeking in David. David had shown a singular, unblemished trustworthiness, and in this respect he had kept his light shining before men with a clear, unclouded lustre. Even amid his spiritual backsliding and sad distrust of God, he had never stained his hands with greed or theft, he had in all these respects kept himself unspotted of the world. *W. G. B.*—The relations of Achish and David appear to have been most honorable to both, and there is something beautiful in the respect and consideration with which this heathen ruler treats the refugee. He does his best to lessen the pain which the communication of the resolve of the princes will cause him, and sends him away with the strongest assurances of interest and confidence. On the other hand, while keenly feeling the implication of the princes, David displays in his self-vindication the art of a skilled diplomatist. He does not say that he wishes to go against Israel, or that he regrets not being permitted to go, but shrewdly asks whether, so far as concerns his past conduct while with Achish, he might not be trusted in conflict with a foe. *Chapman.*

11. Thus happily relieved from a most difficult position, the son of Jesse marched his men slowly back to Ziklag. *Kil.*—If it was on the second day's march that the Philistine lords objected to David's continuance with them, he would be back at Gath in two days, and on the third day reach Ziklag, as is said in ch. 30 : 1. However difficult David's position may have been, still every one must condemn his conduct toward Achish as dishonorable; but God, who often deals with men more mercifully than they deserve, nevertheless rescued him from his state of perplexity, and saved him from the necessity of either fighting against his own countrymen or of still more dishonorably breaking his word to Achish by deserting in the battle. He also sent him home just in time to rescue from a miserable fate those whom he loved. *R. P. S.*

Section 252.

ZIKLAG RAIDED BY AMALEKITES. BY SOUGHT DIVINE DIRECTION, DAVID PURSUES AND DESTROYS INVADERS, AND RECOVERS WIVES AND SPOIL.

1 SAMUEL 30 :1-31.

30 1 AND it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid upon the South, and upon Ziklag, and had smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire ; and had taken captive the women *and all* that were therein, both small and great : they slew not any, but carried them off, and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire ; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed ; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters : but David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them ? And he answered him, Pursue : for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and shalt without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men : for two hundred stayed behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

Verses 11-15. *An Egyptian slave, abandoned to starve by an Amalekite master, guides David to the invaders.*

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the ground, eating and drinking, and feasting, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day : and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken : and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them : David brought back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made to abide at the brook Besor : and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him : and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given unto us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. And who will hearken unto you in this matter ? for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff : they shall share alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel, unto this day.

Verses 26-31. *David sends of the spoil to all places that had befriended him.*

1, 2. David's return to Ziklag, and the expedition to recover his wives and his property, took place at or about the very time when Saul made his journey to Endor, and when the fatal battle of Gilboa was raging. We have seen that though David never, like Saul, threw off the authority of God, he had been following ways of his own, ways of deceit and unfaithfulness. He too had been exposing himself to the displeasure of God, and on him, as on Saul, some retribution behooved to fall. But in the two cases we see the difference between judgment

and chastisement. In the case of Saul it was judgment that came down ; his life and his career were terminated avowedly as the punishment of his offence. In the case of David the rod was lifted to correct, not to destroy ; to bring him back, not to drive him forever away. There is every reason to believe that the disaster that befell David on his return to Ziklag was the means of restoring him to a trustful and truthful frame. It appears that, in the absence of David and his troop, severe reprisals had been taken by the Amalekites for the defeat and utter destruction which they had lately inflicted on a portion of their tribe. The opportunity of David's absence was taken for invading Ziklag, for which purpose a large and well-equipped expedition had been got together ; and as they met with no opposition, they carried everything before them. Happily, however, as they found no enemies they did not draw the sword ; they counted it better policy to carry off all that could be transported, so as to make use of the goods, and sell the women and children into slavery, and as they had a great multitude of beasts of burden with them (verse 17), there could be no difficulty in carrying out this plan. W. G. B.

It was still the lot of Amalek to take Israel at all advantages. Upon their first coming out of Egypt, when they were weary, weak, and unarmed, then did Amalek assault them ; and now, when one part of Israel was in the field against the Philistines, another was gone with the Philistines against Israel, the Amalekites set upon the coasts of both, and go away laden with the spoil : no other is to be expected of our spiritual adversaries, who are ever readiest to assail, when we are the unreadiest to defend.

3, 4. It was a woful spectacle for David and his soldiers, upon their return, to find ruins and ashes instead of houses ; and instead of their families, solitude. Their city was vanished into smoke, their households into captivity. They lifted up their voices and wept, till they could weep no more. Here was plenty of nothing but misery and sorrow. *Bp. II.*

5, 6. The return of David and his party to this scene of smoking ruins and utter desolation—wives, children, cattle, no longer there—was a moment of overwhelming trial. David's men seemed half maddened with grief. Surely, thought they, somebody must be to blame for this : it must be David. So “ the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters.” How sublimely David rose above the depression, the distractions, the sadness of these surroundings is finely put in these

words : “ *But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*” Ah, he had no other friend who stood by him in this emergency ; and fortunately he could endure without any other. It sufficed him that the infinite God stood by him, never more near and true ; his manifested love never more consoling ; his strong arm never more sustaining ! Very rarely does David's historian turn from his narration of David's outer life to speak of his inner life—the sources of his hope, and courage, and strength ; but this case is an exception. We are thankful to know that in this hour of sorest earthly trial David looked upward ; and lo, God was near. H. C.

7, 8. The first result of the restored feeling of trust in David was his giving honor to God's appointed ordinance by asking counsel of Him, through Abiathar the priest, as to the course he should follow. It is the first time we read of his doing so since he left his own country. At first one wonders how he could have discontinued so precious a means of ascertaining the will of God and the path of duty. But the truth is, when a man is left to himself he cares for no advice or direction but his own inclination. W. G. B.—If we thus, in all our ways, acknowledge God, we may expect that he will direct our steps, as he did David's here, answering him above what he asked, with an assurance that he should recover all. H.

Pursue : for thou shalt surely overtake. At the time when this answer was given, the accomplishment of it was highly improbable ; for the Amalekites were greatly superior in number to David's forces : the route which they had taken was uncertain, and the chance of recovering the booty they had taken very small ; still the oracle was positive, full, and express, and the success was answerable. *Chandler.*—**9, 10.** David asked the Lord whether he should pursue ; and receiving the Divine command to do so, he addressed himself at once to the pursuit, and obtained a splendid success. Such is the energetic action of revived faith. Difficulties go down before its resolutions, and lost things come back to him who boldly pursues. Tears of defeat are turned into songs of victory. The troubles that afflict the people of God are to a large extent chastisements for unbelief or unfaithfulness. D. F.

11–20. They soon came on the track of the Amalekites. They had found an Egyptian slave, whom his inhuman master had, on the hasty retreat from Ziklag, left by the wayside to starve rather than hamper himself with the care of a sick man. Food soon revived him ; and, on promise of safety and freedom, he offered to be

the guide of the party to the place which, as he knew, the Amalekites had fixed upon as sufficiently far from Ziklag to permit them to feast in safety on their booty. A short-lived security theirs. It was the twilight—the beginning, no doubt, of a night of orgies—when David surprised them, “lying about on the ground,” “eating and drinking, and dancing.” No watch had been set; no weapon was in any man’s hands; no danger was apprehended. We can picture to ourselves the scene: how David probably surrounded the camping-place; and with what shouts of vengeance the infuriated Hebrews fell on those who could neither resist nor flee. All night long, all the next day the carnage lasted. Only four hundred servant-lads, who had charge of the camels, escaped. Everything that had been taken by the Amalekites was recovered, besides the flocks and herds of the enemy, which were given to David as his share of the spoil. Best of all, the women and children were safe and unhurt. A. E.—In all likelihood, one self-same day saw David a victor over the Amalekites, and Saul discomfited by the Philistines. How should it be otherwise? David consulted with God, and prevailed; Saul with the Witch of Endor, and perisheth. The end is commonly answerable to the way. *Bp. H.*

21-25. Many of the men having been from weariness unable to pursue the march, had been left on the way by the brook Besor, and it was suggested that these had no right to any of *this* spoil, but only to have their own property and families restored to them. But David decided that they should all share alike; and this thenceforth became established as a law in the Hebrew army, and has been adopted into the practice of modern warfare. *Kit.*—The equity of this law appears from hence—that by common consent these two hundred men were left behind to look after the baggage; were part of the same body of men, linked together in the same common society; hindered by mere weariness from going to fight, which otherwise they would have done; their will was accepted for the deed; and they were in the same common danger, for if the four hundred had been routed their enemies would have soon cut them off. *Patrick.*—Every post of service is not alike a post of honor; yet those that are any way serviceable to the common interest, though in a meaner station, ought to share in the common advantages; as, in the natural body, every member has its use, and therefore has its share of the nourishment. Thus he settled the matter for time to come, made it a statute of his kingdom (a statute of distributions), an ordinance of war,

that as his part is that goes down to the battle, and jeopardis his life in the high places of the field, so shall his be that guards the carriages. H.

Incapacity for rendering conspicuous service is compatible with quiet yet important service. Those who by Providence are hindered from fighting in the high places of the field have good work to do in a quieter form. Missionaries, popular preachers, diligent pastors, and men of high literary culture may be in the forefront; but the mothers who train children in the fear of God, fathers who live godly lives in the world, quiet, wise men who conduct religious movements, widows who cast in their mite, and even sick and weary ones who in the solitude of their chamber offer daily prayers for the hosts of God—render most valuable service in the common enterprise. *Where there is loyalty in service, whatever its lowly form, there is to be honorable recognition.* In Christ’s kingdom there is to be, after his great example in the case of the widow’s mite and the hosannas of children, a recognition by all of the need and value of services apparently insignificant. *Chapman.*

26-31. A considerable portion of the spoil fell to the share of the commander; and this he, with his usual open-handed liberality, employed in sending presents to the elders of various towns and villages in Judah, and to all the places where he had received encouragement and support during his wanderings. This came to them with the message—“Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.” The natural effect of his success, of his discreet liberality, and of the admiration in which he was held, was, that men came over to him in great numbers. “From that time,” says the writer of Chronicles (12 : 22), “day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.” *Kit.*—It was David’s desire to recognize God in connection with this spoil, both to show that he had not made his onslaught on the Amalekites for personal ends, and to acknowledge, in royal style, the goodness which God had shown him. W. G. B.—He was fit to be a king, who thus showed the bounty and liberality of a king. Munificence recommends a man more than magnificence. The Ziphites had none of his presents, nor the men of Keilah; and thus he showed that, though he was such a saint as not to revenge affronts, yet he was not such a fool as not to take notice of them. H.

When things are at the worst, as the common proverb says, they must mend. And they mended with David from that hour. And this was

not because things were then at the worst with him, but because being at the worst, he fought that great fight of affliction well. "HE ENCOURAGED HIMSELF IN THE LORD HIS GOD;" and he found that his encouragements in God exceeded beyond all measure his discouragements in man, although friends combined with enemies to discourage him then. From that moment, when he believingly cast all his dependence upon the Lord his God only, whom he had found faithful in all his promises, and whose providence had never failed him in his deepest dangers—from that moment he was safe—from that moment he was prosperous. "God loves (as David knew)," says an old writer, "to reserve his holy hand for a dead lift in behalf of his servants in covenant with him, when there is a damp upon their hopes, and a death upon their helps." (*Ness.*)

Now that the time of change was come, all things went well with him, and his prosperity increased like a river, gathering strength and fulness in its course, until, long after, a great crime stayed its course, and overwhelmed him with tides of trouble and grief, compared with which the trials of his early days were light. This Ziklag is laid in ashes—but no sooner is he left shelterless than God provides him a better city, even Hebron, a city of refuge, and most truly a refuge to him. Saul even dies at this time to give him room. "Now doth David find the comfort," says Bishop Hall, "that his extremity sought in the Lord his God. Now are his clouds for a time passed over, and the sun breaks gloriously forth. David shall reign after his sufferings. So shall we, if we endure to the end, find a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give us at that day."

Kil.

Review of David's Life as an Outlaw.

At first he took refuge with Samuel in the

prophetic school at Ramah. But a final test proved that reconciliation with Saul was impossible, and he fled by way of Nob to the court of Achish. Here his stay was brief and perilous: he soon escaped, and gathered a band of men about him in the cave of Adullam. For a time he seems to have crossed over into Moab, but returning to the land of Judah by Gad's direction, he wandered up and down, hunted from time to time by Saul. There is no continuous history of his life at this period; only a series of scenes which illustrate his providential escapes from the hand of his pursuer, his pious regard for the anointed king, the Divine control which restrained him from hasty revenge. Driven at length to flee the country, he established a miniature kingdom at Ziklag, where he practised himself and his men in the arts of war and peace. Once more God's care was manifested in extricating him from the perplexing dilemma into which his own conduct had brought him. This period of his life and the First Book of Samuel close simultaneously with the death of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. All that concerns his reign belongs to the Second Book. This long and varied discipline was designed to fit David for the duties of the throne. His residence at Gibeah, surrounded by envious courtiers, developed his prudence: Saul's persecution tested his generosity and self-control: the perils of his wanderings strengthened his sense of dependence upon God. His position as an outlaw chief trained him in knowledge and government of men: familiarity with the victims of Saul's misgovernment taught the future ruler to know the heart of his subjects, their sorrows, their wrongs, their crimes: even the residence in Moab and Philistia contributed to nurture larger sympathies which might fit him for his wider mission as king of Israel. A. F. K.

Section 253.

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

1 SAMUEL 28 : 3, 5-25.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of
5 the land. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trem-
6 bled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by
7 dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman

that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night : and he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land : wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die ? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee ? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice : and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me ? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid : for what seest thou ? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of ? And she said, An old man cometh up ; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up ? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed ; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams : therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary ? And the LORD hath wrought for himself, as he spake by me : and the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, and didst not execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines : and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me : the LORD shall deliver the host of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel : and there was no strength in him ; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath hearkened unto thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee ; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him ; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house ; and she hasted, and killed it ; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof : and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants ; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

At this point the history is suspended for the purpose of narrating the experiences of King Saul. Saul had mustered his army on the mountains of Gilboa which skirt the eastern portion of the great plain of Esdraelon. H. C.—Three miles north of them is the parallel chain of Little Hermon. These two heights mark the position of the two armies ; Saul and his men on the western heights of Gilboa ; the Philistines on those of Hermon. Endor is beyond Hermon on the northern slope. Coleman.—The Philistine army was encamped at Shunem, now Solam, on the northern side of the valley, while the Israelites “ pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel,” the spring which rises up at the foot of the mound on which the city of Jezreel was built ; and it was while the two armies were thus mutually facing each other that Saul made

his adventurous night journey to visit the witch at Endor, which lay on the farther side of Little Hermon in rear of the Philistine camp. Wilson.

5. About forty years have come and gone since, as their first elected king, he had led out the Israelites to raise the siege of Jabesh Gilead. More than half of that time has passed with the awful doom—“ the kingdom has been rent from thee and given to another”—hanging over his head, drinking up his spirit, unsettling reason on her throne. Ten of these years have been spent in the unreasonable, ungenerous bloodthirsty persecution of David. All the time he has been trying to reign without God over Israel—too often has been engaged in direct attempts to resist God's will. It has been a long and weary conflict ; for woe ever is to the man that

striveth with his Maker ; and, strong man as he was, Saul is well-nigh worn out. Jaded, hopeless, heartless, he surveys that widespread camp of the bold enemies of Israel, and his heart trembles. *Hanna.*

There were three courses open to him : he might sit down in quiet hopelessness, and let the evil come ; or he might in faith and penitent submission commit the whole matter to God, even amid the awful silence ; or he might betake himself to hell for counsel, since heaven was deaf. He chooses the last ! “ God has cast me off ; I will betake myself to Satan. Heaven’s door is shut ; I will see if hell’s be open.” *Bonar.*

7. *Aindur*, as the home of Saul’s far-famed witch is now called, is a wretched-looking place, and yet the position, at the northeast corner of Little Hermon, facing Tabor, and overlooking the valley between them, is really beautiful. The declivity of the mountain is everywhere perforated with caves, and most of the habitations are merely walls built around the entrance to these caverns. The “witch” doubtless occupied one of these caves. *Thompson.*

8. As the journey was very dangerous, Saul disguised himself, and went by night, accompanied only by two men ; and nothing could more plainly set before us his mental anguish, and also his intense desire to pry into the secrets of futurity, than this strange journey. All faith and hope are gone, and a feverish excitement, ready to catch at any aid, however lawless and untrustworthy, had taken their place. R. P. S. — It was eight miles round the eastern shoulder of Hermon to Endor : and he has to steal round the back of the position of the Philistines, who lie on the front slope of Hermon. A. E.

Two hundred years before the battle in which Saul was slain, another leader of Israel had stood upon that same battle-range of Gilboa. A like innumerable hostile array was encamped below, or upon the opposite slope of Little Hermon. But Gideon, to meet the enemy, had only three hundred men ; Saul had “all Israel.” Yet Gideon made ready for the onset, hopeful and stout-hearted, while Saul “greatly trembled,” because Gideon’s sword was also “the sword of the Lord,” while from Saul the Spirit of God had long since departed. Within twenty-four hours preceding either battle, both these chieftains had taken brief excursions from their camps. Both were attended by only one or two retainers. Both stole away by night clandestinely. Both went where it was peril to go : Gideon within the enemy’s lines, Saul into

a witch’s den. Yet Gideon returned exultant, while Saul “fell all along on the earth, sore afraid,” because Gideon went where God had sent him ; Saul against God’s express statute. *Jerome.*

9-11. With unendurable remorse within, and a vague premonition of doom blackening the very night which overhung his secret, silent steps, Saul sought from the woman at Endor that knowledge of the future which he could no longer receive from a rejected God. And, strangely enough, too, it is *Samuel*, God’s prophet, that he would see and hear—a fact which shows where his inmost belief has rested all through his evil career—a fact which includes confession with conviction of guilt, but the confession of remorse, like that of Judas, leading only to self-murder. B. — All human history has failed to record a despair deeper or more tragic than his, who having forsaken God and being of God forsaken, is now seeking to move hell, since Heaven is inexorable to him ; and, infinitely guilty as he is, assuredly there is something unutterably pathetic in that yearning of the disanointed king, now in his utter desolation to change words once more with the friend and counsellor of his youth, and if he must hear his doom, to hear it from no other lips but his. *Trench.*

15. We hear the wail of a perturbed spirit—“I am sore distressed ;” but no confession of sin, no accent of repentance. Saul never fairly faces the question of his own misconduct, always palliates his sin, always evades self-judgment and self-reproach. D. F. — “What shall I do ?” The silence of God and the words of Samuel show that practically this was a question for which no answer was possible. The day for doing was in the past, when Samuel delivered instructions in the name of God. Years of persistent impenitence for disobedience and of self-willed warring against the purposes of God had brought the unhappy man to a time and position in which no action on his part could reverse the judgment impending. Too late ! So is it in human life still. Men may persist in evil ways till ruin is inevitable, and no course is open for retrieval. *Chapman.*

16-25. The time for doing was now past. In quick succession it comes, like thunderbolt on thunderbolt : “Jehovah thine enemy ;” “Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to David ;” “thy sins have overtaken thee !” All this Saul knew long ago, although he had never realized it as now. And then as to his fate : *to-morrow*—defeat, death, slaughter, to Saul, to his sons, to Israel ! One

by one, each stroke heavier than the other, they had pitilessly fallen on the kneeling king, weary, faint from want of food, and smitten to the heart with awe and terror; and now he falls heavily, his gigantic length, to the ground. The woman and Saul's companions had stood aside, nor had any heard what had passed between the two. But the noise of his fall brought them to his side. With difficulty they persuade him to eat ere he starts on his weary return to Jezreel. At last he yields; and, rising from his prostrate position, sits down on the divan, while they wait on him. But he has no longer speech, or purpose, or thought. As one driven to the slaughter, he goes back to meet his doom. It must have been early morning when once more he reached Gilboa—the morning of the dread and decisive battle. A. E.

19. To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me. The case does not require us to press the words beyond the sense of *being in the state of the dead*. There was no occasion then and there to indicate whether his condition in that state would be happy or miserable. It was enough for his purpose then to apprise Saul that he and his sons must die on the morrow and pass into the state of the dead. Samuel, however, did say enough to show that in his belief and certain knowledge, there could be neither fellowship nor sympathy in either this or any other world between such a spirit as that of Saul and his own.

The leading facts of this narrative are clearly stated and easily understood. I take the most obvious sense to be the true one, and must believe, therefore, that the sorceress called for Samuel, and *that Samuel in fact came* and talked with Saul, uttering words most true and terribly appalling. H. C.—The gravity and suitableness of the answer show that it was the spirit of Samuel himself; and the event shows that it was from God. Bp. Wilson.—The narrator all along says it *was* Samuel, which is better authority for the fact than the assertion of the woman, or the impression of Saul. The latter, indeed, forthwith bent himself low in humble obeisance, which he was not likely to have done unless he saw the figure visibly before him, and felt assured that it was Samuel. The historian says that it was Samuel whom he saw, Samuel to whom he spoke, Samuel who spoke to him. All the circumstances agree with this, and are unaccountable under any other hypothesis; the woman had no time for collusive arrangements; the answer given by the apparition was true, was fulfilled to the letter. Kit.—The history appears to leave us in no doubt, namely, that,

though not through the incantations of the wretched enchantress, but to her own unaffected surprise no less than terror, and only by the will of God, Samuel himself, under whatever inexplicable conditions, delivered the dread message which is put into his lips. The importance of that message—its importance in relation to the whole history of Saul—justified any means, however extraordinary, which might be required to invest it with due authority and impressiveness. W. Lee.

That the spirit of Samuel himself appeared was the view of the ancient Jewish church. This is attested (a) by the Sept. addition in 1 Chron. 10 : 13; "Saul asked counsel of her that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of her; and Samuel made answer to him:" (b) by the Book of Ecclesiasticus (46 : 20); "After his death [Samuel] prophesied, and showed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy:" (c) by Josephus; and the generality of Jewish commentators. The same opinion was maintained by early Christian writers—e.g., Justin Martyr, Origen, Augustine, and others. Unquestionably it is the plain and natural meaning of the narrative. The expressions in verse 15, "Samuel said to Saul;" verse 16, "Then said Samuel;" verse 20, "the words of Samuel;" leave no doubt of this. A. F. K.

The most terrible fact of all is the total absence of all penitence on the part of Saul. He was clear of offences which make some pages in David's history nothing better than one huge blot. But oh! how much better it would have been to have sinned like David, if only he had repented like David; if a temper resembling at all the temper which dictated the fifty-first Psalm had found place in him. But all this was far from him. Darkness is closing round him; anguish has taken hold of him; but the broken and the contrite heart, there is no remotest sign or token of this; no reaching out after the blood of sprinkling. We listen, but no voice reaches us like his who exclaimed, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;" but dark and defiant and unbelieving, he who had inspired such high hopes, he who for awhile seemed about to justify them all, goes forward to meet his doom. Abp. Trench.

Saul's history is a stern warning of the fatal consequences of uncontrolled self-will, of the inevitable descent of an unrepentant heart from bad to worse, of the hopeless hardening which results from neglect to use grace given. A. F. K.—How many who have despised the advice

of a father or a mother, and grieved them by opposition and disobedience, long bitterly to bring them back when they have gone down to the grave, that they may have the benefit of the counsel which they once slighted and scorned ! If they could go to the necromancer in the hour of their distress, it would not be, "Bring me up the companion who cheered me in my gayeties ;" but, "Bring me up the father or the mother who with weeping eyes and broken voice admonished me against sinful indulgences." . . . And yet, if you neglect the Lord and continue to resist the strivings of his Spirit, so that at length he departs from you as he departed from Saul, what would it avail that the grave could give up its inhabitant—if the parent, the friend, or the minister should return at your bidding ?
Melvill.

The spirits of the departed live in the region

that God hath given them—out of the body we know ; but whether by knowledge and sympathy in any close connection with the living, we cannot tell. But across the gulf that divides us and them, one utterance of theirs falls upon our listening ear—"To-morrow,"—they say to us—a few more days—a few more years it may be to us—to-morrow to them,—“thou, too, shalt be with us.” Let us drink the message in ; and as we know that the passage into the world of spirits is so near, and shall bring with it such solemn issues, so let this short day of life be spent by each of us humbly, watchfully, prayerfully, dutifully, that when that morrow cometh, instead of lost spirits rising to mock our advent with the scornful question, “Art thou also become one of us ?” happy spirits with outstretched arms may welcome us to the sunbright shores of an unshadowed eternity.
Hanna.

Section 254.

SAUL AND HIS SONS SLAIN ON GILBOA BY THE PHILISTINES.

1 SAMUEL 28 : 4 ; 29 : 1 ; 31 : 1-13. 1 CHRONICLES 10 : 13, 14.

28 4 AND the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem : and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

29 1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their hosts to Aphek : and the Israelites pitched by the fountain which is in Jezreel.

31 1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel : and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons ; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him ; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith ; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not ; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons and his armor-bearer, all his house and all his men, that same day died together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled ; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings unto the house of their idols, and to the people. And they put his armor in the house of the Ashtaroth : and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan ; and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.



THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

1 Chron. 10 13 So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD, which he kept not ; and also for that he asked counsel of one 14 that had a familiar spirit, to inquire *thereby*, and inquired not of the LORD : therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

In the great plain of Esdraelon, the most signal battle-field of the world from the days of Joshua to those of Napoleon, extending almost from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, in the southern part of Galilee, in a locality where places are found still bearing the names of Gilboa and Endor, this greatest and most decisive conflict between Saul and the Philistines was fought. B.—Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, Arabs, and French, warriors out of every nation under heaven, have pitched their tents upon the plains of Esdraelon, and have beheld their banners wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon. *Clark.*

28 : 4. The Philistines broke in upon Israel in an unexpected quarter. Instead of advancing upon their enemies' territory directly from the west, and up through the mountains, they made a long *détour* to the north, advancing along the plain of Sharon to Mount Carmel, thence turning eastward and passing from Carmel into the plain of Esdraelon, and thence pursuing their march through that plain to the edge of Little Hermon—to a point on the north side of the valley of Jezreel, by the town of Shunem. Here was an admirable field for the employment of their horses and chariots, and doubtless they fully availed themselves of it. Saul and his forces, marching, in all probability, directly northward from about Gibeah, encamped on the northern edge of Gilboa, by the fountain of Jezreel. The two armies were thus on opposite sides of the valley of Jezreel, the Philistines on the north, the Israelites on the south, with a level grassy plain between. N. C. B.

Gilboa is still a barren, bleak, and desolate range. It is about ten miles long, and not more than 500 or 600 feet above the plain, reaching from near Jezreel in the west to Bethshan at the eastern extremity. It separates the southern plain of Jezreel from the central portion, which slopes between Gilboa and Little Hermon to the Valley of the Jordan. On the top of the mountain, at the east end, a village called Jelbon preserves the old name of Gilboa. The battle of Gilboa was fought on the northern slopes of the mountain. The Philistines had collected their army at *Shunem*, now Salem, under the *hill Moreh* (Little Hermon), on the opposite side of the middle portion of the eastern plain (28 : 4), and pitched in *Aphek* (29 : 1) a

place we cannot now identify ; while Saul gathered the troops of Israel opposite to them at the *fountain of Jezreel*, the same as the *spring Harod* of Gibeon. H. B. T.

(See *cut*, p. 355, and other maps, pp. 184, 213. B.)

Though wearied with the long night journey and broken in spirit, Saul drew up his troops in the morning at the fountain of Harod. The position was badly chosen. The ground slopes down from Shunem, and the Philistines had thus all the advantage for attack ; while both front and flanks of the Israelites were exposed, and flight all but impossible, owing to the steepness of the mountain behind. The Israelites were broken by the first impetuous charge of the enemy, and the slaughter was dreadful as they attempted to flee up Gilboa. *Porter.*

A person who compares the Bible account of this battle with the region around Gilboa, has the same sort (if not degree) of evidence that the account relates what is true, that a person would have that such battles as those of Yorktown or Waterloo really took place, who should compare the current histories of those achievements with the places where they were performed. Gilboa, as the name of a hamlet on the ridge of mountains anciently known under that appellation, as well as Jezreel, Shunem, Endor, Bethshan, are all found still bearing the same names. They lie almost within sight of each other. A person can start from any one of them and make the circuit of them all in a few hours. Aphek is the only one of the cluster not yet identified. Jezreel is on the northern slope of Gilboa, and at the distance of twenty minutes to the east is a large fountain, and a smaller one still nearer ; just the position which a chieftain would select, both on account of its elevation and the supply of water needed for his troops. Opposite to Jezreel, across a narrow valley, on the side of a parallel ridge, is Shunem, where the Philistines could watch the movements of the enemy with great advantage. Again, a village—Endor—lies on the northern side of the same ridge ; so that Saul, leaving his camp at Jezreel, could steal his way under cover of the night across the intervening valley, and over the moderate summit which he would have to ascend, and, after his consultation with the woman of Endor could return to his forces without having been missed by any, except



PLAIN OF ESDRAELON, OR JEZREEL, WITH PLACES NOTED IN THE BATTLES OF BARAK, GIDEON, AND SAUL.

those in the secret. Finally, Bethshan (now Beisan) a little to the east in the Valley of the Jordan, visible from Jezreel, must have been, judging from its natural facilities, a strong place; and hence the Philistines, after the battle, would naturally take possession of such a town; so that we find them intrenched precisely where we might expect, when we read of their mutilating there the body of Saul, as a part of their barbarous celebration of the victory. *Hackett.*

Saul's forces were gathered about the fountain of Jezreel; and the Philistines were encamped across the valley of Jezreel northward, under Little Hermon—just as the Midianites had been, only farther west, near Shunem. Endor, on the northern slope of Little Hermon, east of Shunem, where Saul by night consulted the witch; the heights of Gilboa, on which the principal slaughter of the Israelites occurred, and on which Saul and his sons perished; Bethshan, a few miles to the east, the town occupied by the Philistines after the battle, and on whose walls the headless bodies of Saul and his sons were exposed; all these places, as well as Shunem and the fountain of Jezreel, being well identified, mark the history of this battle with a vivid distinctness even surpassing that of its predecessors. N. C. B.

2, 3. *Saul's three sons are slain, and Saul himself is mortally wounded.* The fate of his sons is almost of necessity bound up with that of Saul. Nobly and valiantly they met that fate, Jonathan, the faithful, royal son and friend, with his brothers. If truth and courage, excellence of character and faith in God, could have averted the stroke, then Jonathan had not fallen, but lived to share in the prosperity and rejoice in the friendship of David. But God willed it thus, and "the arrows of the Philistines dismissed his princely spirit to a more exceeding weight of glory than that which he relinquished to the brother of his love." By his death, too, we can see in the light of subsequent events, how the providence of God made the way of David to the kingdom more clear and open, by removing the only son of Saul whom the people loved and would have constrained to assume the throne. B.

That death on Gilboa was a fitting finish to his career! It was well that he who in life had given the world its greatest example of faithfulness to a friend should in death show to all sons, down to the end of time, that neither a father's failings, nor even a father's crimes, must be allowed to quench filial affection and fidelity. It was a noble thing in Jonathan that when sin had come with its desolating hand and destroyed the beauty of his father's character, he carried

himself as one who would say, "He is my father still; I will live for him; and, if need be, I will die for him." *C. Vince.*—*Jonathan's history* shows the beauty, the excellence, and the power of single-hearted trust in God, and the joy and helpfulness of mutual trust in man. It affirms that such trust in God will stand trial without being cast down; nay, will help a weaker brother whose fortitude is feebler than his courage. And it shows how beautiful and helpful may be the ministry of human friendship if the Lord be a party to its covenant of affection and service. B.

4. The heavy cloud which had brooded so long over the doomed Saul broke in lightning crash on the disastrous field of Gilboa. Where is there a sadder and more solemn story of the fate of a soul which makes shipwreck "of faith and of a good conscience," than that awful page which tells how, godless, wretched, mad with despair and measureless pride, he flung himself on his bloody sword, and died a suicide's death, with sons and armor-bearer and all his men, a ghastly court of corpses, laid round him? He had once been brave, modest, and kind, full of noble purposes and generous affections—and he ended so. Into what doleful regions of hate and darkness may self-will drag a soul when once the reins fall loose from a slackened hand! A. M.—Without trace of repentance or any fear of God, with no thought of the eternal result to his soul, at the instigation of pride and fear and shame as to the consequences of his capture by the Philistines, he proved the tremendous force of a hardened, reckless will by self-destruction. Some would call this courage, but courage is a reasonable, principled thing, which may lead to endurance of death by the stake or the battle, but never to self-murder. This is only an effect of cowardice and an act of guilt, for it is a desertion of the post assigned us of God, it is a presumptuous assumption of God's sole right as the arbiter of life. Saul "played the fool," as he said to David, in his life, but he crowned his folly with cowardice and the deepest guilt, in his self-inflicted death. B.—His end was in wild and awful keeping with the whole of his kingly career. So true is it that as men live they die; nor is it the most fearful and affecting of incidents, nor the known and felt approach of death in its most terrible form, that can of themselves turn any human spirit to God. *Hanna.*—As a man sows he reaps. As a life is shaped, so is the death determined. We speak of the penalty on evil-doers, but it is no mere arbitrary infliction; it is the natural fruit and necessary result of the



FOUNTAIN OF JEZREEL.

misconduct. One leads a sensual life, and the penalty on him is that of exhaustion, disease, and premature decay. One leads a selfish life, hardening his heart against appeal or reproach, and his doom is to lose all power and experience of sympathy, to pass through the world winning no love, and pass out of the world drawing after him no regret. D. F.

5-13. *The final result of the battle and treatment of Saul's body.* The neighboring cities were forsaken by the men of Israel, and permanently occupied by the Philistines, from which they were not dislodged for a considerable period. From the following chapter (2 S. 1) we learn that an Amalekite, who had witnessed the death of Saul and his armor-bearer, and who professed to have aided in Saul's self-destruction, took the crown and the bracelets, the ancient and still subsisting insignia of royalty, from the body of the king, and brought them to David at Ziklag. Then followed the savage mutilation and maltreatment of the bodies of Saul and his sons by the Philistines. Severing the head from the body of Saul, they bear it,

with his royal armor, in triumph through their cities, afterward putting the head in the idol temple of Dagon, and hanging the armor as a trophy and offering in the house of Ashtaroath. His body and the bodies of his sons were nailed upon the wall of Bethshan, from whence they were soon after taken down by the loyal warriors of Jabesh and honorably buried there. B.

7. The plain of Esdraelon is interrupted, and in a sense divided into two, by three hills—Tabor, Gilboa, and Little Hermon. On the eastern side of these hills the plain is continued on to the Jordan Valley. The effect of the battle of Gilboa was that all the rich settlements in that part of the plain had to be forsaken by the Israelites and given up to the Philistines. W. G. B.

11, 12. There was still truth, gratitude, and courage in Israel. And the brave men of Jabesh-gilead marched all the weary night; they crossed Jordan; they climbed that steep brow, and silently detached the dead bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Bethshan. Reverently they bore them across the river for

burial, and ere the morning light were far out of reach of the Philistines. A. E.—For this act of loyalty David sent special messengers to bless them (2 S. 2 : 5). Some years afterward David removed the bones and buried them in Saul's ancestral sepulchre at Zelah (2 S. 21 : 12). H. B. T.

In the character of Saul and that of David we find great and marked changes brought about by different agents and causes, and through various occasions and instruments. In each we can mark distinct periods of progress, in evil or good. The characters, too, while each to some extent is mixed, are opposed—evil predominating in the one, and good in the other. And there is a difference in the preparation for the kingdom. Saul was subjected to no previous discipline, no trial which might lead to self-knowledge and self-struggle. Yet God had given him a bright, genial, kindly nature, which, if he had only yielded to the Spirit of the Lord (also given him at his anointing), might have been developed into true spiritual nobleness, and made his reign a joy to himself and a glory to Israel. But he had a crown without a cross, and his career is simply typical of all that attain to any of earth's prizes without previous struggle or denial. His elevation did but act upon the uncrucified selfish principle in his heart, stimulated an unhumbled self-will to supplant God's will, and made self-interest the supreme object of thought, purpose, and seeking. Long as He could, the Spirit of God wrought with Saul, by kindness, bounties, successes, by instruction, entreaty, and warning, striving to hold him or bring him back to obedience—but with no avail. Then the good Spirit departed, and the evil spirit, the same who since the fall has "worked in the hearts of the children of disobedience," entered in. No peace had he while living, and there was no hope in his death. B.

The fatal defect in Saul was the want of true piety. It was never the first law of his soul to obey God in everything, with no possible exception. In this point he was in utter contrast with David. Help from God toward self-control and toward the formation of a noble character, Saul never sought. He was never a man of prayer. David was. In this one vital and fundamental respect they stand before us in total contrast with each other. True, Saul sought after the Lord in his great distress when overwhelmed with fear; but *never in other circumstances*. The great moral lesson which Saul's history leaves for the instruction of mankind is, therefore, precisely this: That without

true piety, the finest qualities of character and the highest position in society will fail utterly to make a true and noble man. If Saul's heart had been true to God he would have been one of the grandest specimens of humanity. But, lacking this true obedience to God, he made his life an utter failure, and his character a moral wreck. H. C.—His own sorrowful verdict upon his life we read in ch. 26 : 21 : *I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly*. At the outset never was a life so fair in its promise, ample in its resources, and grand in its opportunities. At its close never was a life so full of remorse in the retrospect, so desolating in its waste, and awful in its misuse of means and opportunities. Never a career that illustrated so pointedly the effects of prosperity upon a selfish spirit; the length in wickedness to which the unrestrained human heart will go. Never a career that showed so conclusively how the principle of evil, acting through ambition, vanity, avarice, and passion, will crush every natural and kindly feeling, debase every fine and ennobling element, and finally lead, through almost every crime, to utter destruction. And the saddest recorded history of man is that of Saul's closing years—abandoned of God, beset and tormented by the Evil Spirit before his time, and, finally, in the very anguish of despair, rushing suicidally into the eternal darkness. B.

The history of Saul brings home to us these facts: That the life we now live is a life of probation; that God takes men and puts them in certain conditions to try them. We are each upon our trial as certainly as Saul was upon his. All the finer qualities of Saul display themselves at the outset of his career; they gradually fade and fail from him, pride, meanwhile, and defiance of God coming in their room, until at last caprice, and jealousy, and envy, and an open contempt of all the high qualities which he once owned, only the courage, last gift to forsake a man, often abiding when every other has departed—until this only remains. We learn from Saul not to build on any good thing which we have in ourselves. Let us bring that good thing to God and receive it back from God, with that higher consecration which He alone can give. *Trench*.

In the career of Saul we find the most signal example on record of the natural and inevitable tendencies of determined *self-rule and self-seeking*. There is but one right rule, and that the rule of God; but one right aim, and that the service of God. When once the man has deliberately swung loose from God's commands, wil-

fully forsaken His service, and determinedly turned aside from His ways, then begins a deterioration of character that ceases not until transformation into the likeness of the Arch-spirit of evil is complete ; then the soul enters upon a course of evil-doing which leads irresistibly downward with ever accelerating speed ; a course which, while it deadens the heart to all influences of good, quickens every sensibility to "the fearful looking for of judgment," and at length, anticipating very doom, fills the conscience with an anguishing foretaste of "the undying worm and unquenchable fire." So "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness," driven away, utterly and forever, from peace and hope, driven into unmitigated misery and despair ! So "*sin, when it is finished, bringeth*

forth death !" We read in this history, further, a signal illustration of God's entire dealing with the self-willed, self-abandoned soul ; on the one hand, multiplying blessings, exhortations, warnings, helps to good and hindrances to evil ; and on the other hand, when all these have failed, interposing to overrule and restrain the outacting of evil by the determined, hardened sinner. One only parallel we find, a striking one in all these points if closely traced, in the case of Judas. Differing widely, indeed, in all its incidents, and differing in its subordinate motives, but alike in the spirit of the actors, in resistance to the Spirit of God, and in breaking away from all Divine restraint, alike in the Divine overruling of their deeds, and alike in the closing act ! B.

Section 255.

DAVID'S LAMENT OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

2 SAMUEL 1 : 1-27.

- 1 AND it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of
- 2 the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag ; it came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head : and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.
- 3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, Out of the
- 4 camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter ? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, The people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also
- 5 are fallen and dead ; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the
- 6 young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead ? And the young man that told him said, It happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul
- 7 leaned upon his spear ; and, lo, the chariots and the horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.
- 8, 9 And he said unto me, Who art thou ? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite. And he said unto me, Stand, I pray thee, beside me, and slay me, for anguish hath taken hold of me ;
- 10 because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood beside him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen : and I took the crown that was upon his head,
- 11 and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them ; and likewise all the men that were with him :
- 12 and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel ; because they were fallen by the sword.
- 13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou ? And he answered, I
- 14 am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid
- 15 to put forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed ? And David called one of the young
- 16 men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head ; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.
- 17, 18 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son : and he bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow : behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.

- 19 Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places !
How are the mighty fallen !
- 20 Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon ;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
- 21 Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
neither fields of offerings :
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul [as of one], not anointed with oil.
- 22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
- 23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided ;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
- 24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
- 25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
- 26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me :
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
- 27 How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished !

The Second Book of Samuel continues and almost concludes the life of David. He is the central figure throughout. Round him are grouped many remarkable men, but no one of those times makes such an impression on us as David himself, through the force of his character, the versatility of his mind, and the variety of incidents and experience through which he passed. The narrative is worthy of its place in the canon of Scripture, not only for its biography of this great king, but also for its intimations of Messiah to come, its practical teachings concerning the way of patience and faith, and its piercing exposure of the lustings of the flesh, which war against the soul. There are fascinating passages in the book, and splendid bursts of poetry, but there are pages that we read with pain and shame, for the ways of David in prosperity were not close with God as in the earlier days when he bore the yoke in his youth. D. F.

It was at Ziklag, in the land of the Philistines, that David heard of the issue of the battle on Mount Gilboa. He received the tidings of a disaster which involved the ruin of his enemy, if it also inflicted a terrible blow on his country, in no unworthy spirit. That David's mourning for Saul, no less than for Jonathan, was heartfelt, cannot be doubted. He had no purpose to serve in paying insincere honors to the memory of a king who had already lost his hold on the affections of his former subjects. And every word of the magnificent elegy which he composed on the occasion bears testimony to the depth of the emotions by which it was inspired. W. Lee.—It must have been a very wonderful heart that could so soon rid itself of every shred of bitter feeling to Saul—that could

blot out, in one great act of forgiveness, the remembrance of many long years of injustice, oppression, and toil, and leave no feelings but those of kindness, admiration, and regret, called forth by the contemplation of what was favorable in Saul's character ! Does not this show forgiveness to be a Divine spirit ? W. G. B.

2. On the third day. The exact position of Ziklag in the *Negeb*, or "South country," has not been determined. But if we may place it in the neighborhood of Beersheba, the distance from the battle-field of Gilboa was about ninety or one hundred miles as the crow flies, between two and three days' journey for an active runner, so that the battle probably took place about the same time as David's return home.

3-10. The Amalekite's story was clearly a fabrication. In wandering over the field of battle he had found the corpse of Saul and stripped it of its ornaments. With these he hastened to David, and invented his fictitious story in the hope of securing an additional reward for having with his own hand rid David of his bitterest enemy and removed the obstacle which stood between him and the throne. A. F. K.

16. This self-convicted, wretched Amalekite died for a crime which he had not committed ; yet he well deserved to die for taking the guilt of it upon him. David rightly judged that Saul had no power over his own life, and consequently should not have been obeyed in such a command. Besides, it behooved David to vindicate his own innocence to the world by this public execution, since otherwise he might have been branded with the guilt of employing that wretch to murder his persecutor. Delaney.

*David's Elegy upon the Slain.**Verses 17-27.*

The *song of lamentation or elegy*, composed by David upon occasion of the death of Saul and Jonathan has been admired in all ages for its touching pathos and exquisite beauty. "David lamented with this lamentation." He not only composed this elegy, but sung it; not only sung it himself, but gave command that it be taught to the sons and daughters of "Judah"—of *Judah* specially because they were of his own tribe; because then and for the ensuing seven years he was king of Judah only; and because his magnanimous soul discarded all tribal jealousies, and would have the men of Judah mourn for Saul no less than the men of Benjamin. "He bade them teach Judah" the *bow-song*—this very song in which "the bow of Jonathan" holds a sufficiently prominent position to supply a distinctive name for this song. The Hebrews were accustomed to designate their songs by some such catch-words, of which we have instances apparently in the Psalms. H. C.

The elegy is not a Divine hymn, nor given to be used in Divine service; nor is there any mention of God in it; but it is a human composition, and therefore was inserted, not in the Book of Psalms, which, being of Divine original, is preserved; but in the Book of Jasher, which, being only a collection of common poems, is long since lost. H.—The elegy was included in the volume known as *The Book of Jasher*, or, *the Upright*. This book is mentioned only here and in Josh. 10 : 13. All that can be inferred from the references to it is that it contained a collection of ancient poems, commemorating remarkable events or great heroes of the national history; so that it formed a "book of Golden Deeds" for the instruction of posterity, a "national anthology" to which additions would be made from time to time as occasion offered. A. F. K.

The poem opens with verse 19. "The beauty of Israel"—her warrior king and his noble sons—"are slain upon the high places of Israel" [Mount Gilboa]. The key-note of the song is in the refrain—"How are the mighty fallen!" repeated in verses 25, 27. "Tell it not in Gath"—for David had spent years in Gath, and knew but too well how its sons and daughters would catch up these tidings, and hasten to their idol temples with jubilant songs of triumph. He knew how the streets of Askelon would re-echo with rejoicings; and this thought was bitter to his soul. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let no dew or rain fall on you," henceforth forever! Let

there be no fields rich with products for sacrificial offerings. Let everlasting blight mar your former glory! It would be painfully incongruous to see those hill-tops smiling again in verdure and beauty after having been the theatre of scenes so mournful. To the sad heart of mourners it seems some relief to imprecate desolation on the localities which have become associated with the death of the loved and the brave. All this is touchingly true to nature. These imprecations were felt to be the more appropriate, because on those heights the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away as if of one who had never been anointed king of Israel. Yet let it not be hastily assumed that Saul and Jonathan were not brave and successful warriors. The bow of Jonathan never turned back from before the mighty; the sword of Saul never returned from battle without being laden with trophies of the slain. Moreover, Saul and Jonathan were not only valiant in war; "they were lovely and pleasant in their lives." Of Jonathan's amiable and noble spirit, David never could say too much. He had profound reason to appreciate him, and he was of a nature too appreciative, too noble and magnanimous, not to reciprocate such love. As to Saul, David cherished a profound regard for him as his anointed sovereign, and, no doubt, saw much (in some aspects of his character) that he could both esteem and love; but Saul's manifestations were strangely mixed; and David leaves us a little in doubt how much of this touching elegy of Saul and Jonathan was indebted to Jonathan rather than to Saul for its tenderness and pathos, and its unsurpassed appreciation of amiable qualities. In verse 24, Saul stands out in his distinctive personality as king of Israel. The daughters of the land might fitly bewail the death of their king, remembering how he had ministered to their adornment—the ruling passion in the oriental woman's heart being recognized here as in the song of Deborah (Ju. 5 : 30). But when the poet's thought turns to Jonathan (verses 25, 26), his tones tremble with most touching pathos:—"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been to me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Thus the loving heart of David bewails what seemed to him the untimely death of his dearest friend. All his fond hopes that Jonathan might survive his father, and stand beside himself in the honors or the cares of Israel's throne, are dashed suddenly and forever. The joys of a friendship so deep, so self-sacrificing, so noble, and so pure, have passed away, to return no more! H. C.

In some respects, Jonathan stands without a rival in all history, sacred or profane. Had we known him better, no doubt we might have found some faults in him, and said that it was true of him as of the best of fallen men, that the brightest sun is dimmed by spots. Yet there is no fault recorded of Jonathan; and conferring on him more honor than on any one else whose name stands in this sacred book, God has not left a stain to blot his memory. If there ever was friendship in this world, pure, unalloyed by any inferior metal, disinterested, free of envy, without an element of selfishness, incapable of harboring a suspicious thought, and capable of rejoicing in another's gain, even to his own loss, it had glowed in the bosom that now lay cold on Gilboa's mountains. Battle spear never pierced such a generous heart; nor had war ever such a graceful victim offered at her blood-stained shrine. Man never possessed a friend such as David lost in Jonathan; and none with a head and heart can read his tragic history without feeling that he was worthy of this extraordinary, but not extravagant, laudation: "Thy love to me was wonderful." *Guthrie*.

This ode is a lamentation equally pathetic and heroic, the lamentation of a brave man over brave men. The bursts of sorrow in it are so strong and sudden; so short, various, and unconnected, that never perhaps was grief painted in more living and lasting colors. It affords a beautiful proof that David's heart was so softened and melted by grief as to lose every trace of Saul's cruelty to him. He remembered nothing in him now but the brave man, the valiant leader, the magnificent prince, the king of God's appointment, his own once indulgent master; the father of his Jonathan. *Delaney*.—In his circumstances, the utmost required of David would have been to preserve a decent and becoming silence about Saul, burying all recollections of him in the grave. But he was incapable of this; he was cast in a finer mould; he was made of nobler metal. His generous heart, forgiving and forgetting every wrong, warmed at the recollection of those early, happy days, when the king drew the shepherd boy from obscurity, received him into the bosom of his family, showered royal favors on his head; and when, harp in hand, he threw the chains of music over Saul's stormy passions, bidding the waves be still. David has buried Saul's faults in the grave, "earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes." But while he leaves the dross to lie undisturbed among the cold embers, he brings out the gold—the finer elements of Saul's character; and without, after the fashion of many ly-

ing tombstones, imputing to him virtues which he never possessed, he tells all the good of Saul he can, and crowns his memory with the honors due to a king, a dutiful son, a kind-hearted father, and a man as brave as ever faced a foe. *Guthrie*.—Peculiarly touching is the absence in this elegy of even the faintest allusion to David's painful relations to Saul in the past. All that is merely personal seems blotted out, or, rather, as if it had never existed in the heart of David. In this respect we ought to regard this ode as casting most valuable light on the real meaning and character of what are sometimes called the vindictive and imprecatory Psalms. Nor should we omit to notice what a German divine has so aptly pointed out: that, with the exception of the lament of Jabesh-gilead, the only real mourning for Saul was on the part of David, whom the king had so bitterly persecuted to the death. A. E.

Its poetic beauty is the least merit of this exquisite ode. It is as an effusion of the heart, the spontaneous expression of a spirit the most noble, the most generous, the most forgiving, the most affectionate, that we value it the most. What profound sympathy for the fallen king, what remembrance of every virtue, what a veil drawn over every fault, and, above all, what a sinking out of sight of all bygone injuries, an utter wiping of them out of the memory, does this sublime elegy exhibit! We believe that David not only wrote here exactly as he thought and felt; that there had been so much in Saul in his intercourse with Jonathan of the pleasant and the lovely, as fully to sustain what was thus said of him, and to keep the people that sang this funeral dirge from thinking that they were chanting an untruth over the dead. The Scriptural narrative of the life and reign of Saul was intended to represent him in his character and conduct as the first anointed king of God's chosen people. It traces the false steps which in that character he took. It unfolds the fearful evils, both personal and national, that the taking of these steps produced. But it covers only a very small portion of the forty years of his lengthened reign. It gives us, after all, but a few glimpses of him as a man. We see especially but very little of his domestic life and habits—his intercourse with his children. We take David's testimony for it, that in these large intervals, uncovered by the Scripture story, in those quiet domestic scenes that brought him and his children together, there was a power in the love of Jonathan and the rest, that did all, perhaps more than all, that David's harp had done in earlier years—that under its spell, the

cares of the kingdom for the time thrown off, the moody monarch forgot his melancholy, and --the evil spirit far away--became all as a father that he had promised to be when himself a son. *Hanna.*

We have a wonderful variety in the Bible. Had the Bible (which is an inspired *library* rather than an inspired *book*) been put together by men, no matter how learned and holy, this variety would have been wanting. We should have had a more or less useful and edifying, but probably more rather than less insipid volume, suited at best to the needs of the generation in which its compilers lived, and probably of only a limited portion of that. Instead of this, we have, both in form and in matter, a many-sidedness and variety of which the world has never wearied, and in which every person can find something to delight his taste, and every soul something to

satisfy its needs. Side by side with the stormy and blood-stained pictures of the Book of Judges we have had the bright oasis of the Book of Ruth ; the vile conduct of the sons of Eli is narrated in the same chapter with the sweet innocence of the child Samuel ; and as the reign of Saul darkens through his withdrawing more and more from God, and God at last withdrawing His Spirit from him, we have bright lights constantly breaking in from the life of the young son of Jesse. His guileless youth, the gloomy king's love for him, never quite quenched even in Saul's darkest days, the touching friendship with his persecutor's son, the exquisite lament over Saul and Jonathan, all these things are a relief and a refreshment in the midst of such scenes as Saul's bloodthirsty hunt after David, the massacre of the priests, the night visit to Endor, the suicide on Mount Gilboa. *Plummer*

Section 256

DAVID ANOINTED AT HEBRON AS KING OVER JUDAH. ISHBOSHETH MADE KING OVER ISRAEL BY ABNER. CONFLICT OF FORCES UNDER ABNER AND JOAB.

2 SAMUEL 2 : 1-32.

- 1 AND it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah ? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither
- 2 shall I go up ? And he said, Unto Hebron. So David went up thither, and his two wives also,
- 3 Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household : and they dwelt in the cities
- 4 of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.
- 5 And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried
- 6 him. And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you : and I also will requite you this
- 7 kindness, because ye have done this thing. Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant : for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.
- 8 Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul,
- 9 and brought him over to Mahanaim ; and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.
- 10 (Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned
- 11 two years.) But the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Verses 12-32. *Conflict between Abner and Joab at Gibeon. Abner is beaten, but is suffered to retire by Joab.*

The First Book of Samuel brings the history of David's life down to the close of that period of preparatory discipline by which he was divinely educated for his high destiny. The quiet life in the home at Bethlehem, the novel duties and temptations of Saul's court, the manifold hardships and perils of exile, had done their work, and moulded the lines of that many-sided

character with an ineffaceable impress. As shepherd he had acquired the spirit of calm thought and deep reflection ; as courtier he had been trained in prudent self-control and chivalrous generosity ; as outlaw he had learned quick sympathy with the oppressed, knowledge of men, and power of government ; and above all, each successive phase of experience had quickened and developed that conscious dependence upon God which was the fundamental secret of his strength throughout his life. Step by step he had been led forward, steadily refusing to take the shaping of his career into his own hands by deeds of violence, and "committing his way unto the Lord," in the full assurance that "He would bring it to pass."

The Second Book of Samuel contains the history of David's reign. When the discipline of his early life was complete, the death of Saul opened his way to the throne. The task before him was immense. Internal disorganization consequent upon the misrule of Saul's later years ; the jealousy of the partisans of the old dynasty ; the antagonism of conflicting interests among the different tribes ; a country overrun with victorious and powerful enemies ; the certain prospect that any vigorous attempt to consolidate the kingdom would excite the hostility of foreign enemies—these were some of the difficulties which met him at the outset. And if these obstacles were successfully overcome, and he became the acknowledged sovereign of a united and powerful nation, the trial to his own character could not fail to be severe. Would he continue to be, as the essential nature of the Theocratic Monarchy demanded that he should be, the faithful "servant of Jehovah," the obedient instrument of His will ; or would he, like Saul, assume an attitude of autocratic independence, and fall by the sin of pride and self-reliance ? From such difficulties a weaker man might well have shrunk. But David was a born ruler of men. In his well-knit, sinewy frame, insensible to hardship, incapable of fatigue, he possessed the indispensable prerequisite for a warrior-king ; but higher qualifications than these were the innate aptitude for governing which was early displayed in his control of the wild spirits who gathered round him in his outlaw life ; the fearless courage which had characterized him from his earliest days ; and the singular power which he possessed of inspiring enthusiastic devotion in his followers : and the highest qualification of all was his firm trust and unshaken dependence upon God, coupled with the consciousness of a Divine commission, which led him in each crisis to "wait patiently

upon God," in the confident expectation of Divine guidance. A. F. K.

1-7. The battle of Gilboa left Israel in a state as forlorn as that which ensued upon the defeat of Aphek, except that the ark was not lost, and David was ready to be her deliverer. The country west of Jordan was overrun by the Philistines, who occupied the cities from which their inhabitants had fled. The surviving members of the house of Saul took refuge on the east of Jordan, while David, at the command of God, removed with his band and all his family from Ziklag to Hebron, the ancient sacred city of the tribe of Judah. Here the men of Judah came to him, and anointed him king over their tribe. Thence he sent a message to the men of Jabesh-gilead to thank them for the honor paid to Saul's remains and to announce his accession to the throne. He was now thirty years old, and he reigned in Hebron seven and a half years. P. S.

The death of Saul with his three eldest sons in the fatal battle of Gilboa, fully authorized David to advance his own claims without the reserve he had hitherto maintained. He was king by right. He had been anointed for the reversion, and he was now entitled to possession. By the same right under which Saul had held his crown, David was now entitled to claim it. Saul had been appointed on certain well-understood conditions, which he had violated, and on certain principles, which he had contravened. *Kit.*—Instead of reigning in his own name and right, as Saul sought to do, David regarded himself as the viceroy of God, and sought to serve His will. Yet it seems to have been desirable that such a king as Saul should precede David, in order that the contrast of character might be the more impressively exhibited, and that the nation might learn, through telling experiences, the sort of kingly government that God approved. N. C. B.

1. Not till the offices of justice and affection had been performed, does David remember himself and the change in his own position which had been effected. He had never thought of Saul as standing between him and the kingdom ; the first feeling on his death was not, as it would have been with a less devout and less generous heart, a flush of gladness at the thought of the empty throne, but a sharp pang of pain from the sense of an empty heart. And even when he begins to look forward to his own new course, there is that same remarkable passiveness which we have observed already. His first step is to "inquire of the Lord saying, Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah ?" He will do noth-

ing in this crisis of his fortunes, when all which had been so long a hope seemed to be rapidly becoming a fact, until his Shepherd shall lead him. A. M. — He will not stir from the heaps of Ziklag till he have consulted with the Lord. It did not content him that he had God's warrant for the kingdom ; but he must have his instructions for the taking possession of it. Bp. H. — Signally the brief record reveals *the one sublime fact of absolute surrendry of all self-will, the simple seeking, obeying, and waiting upon the will of God.* He ventures not fully to interpret even so marked an event as the death of Saul, though knowing that he has been Divinely anointed as successor to the throne. Much less does he institute any movement looking toward his enthronement. All is referred to God. God has anointed, has appointed his way thus far, opened the pathway to the crown, but not one forward step will he take of himself, until he is sent. But the same faith that bids him await God's direction, constrains him to seek God's guidance, and, as has been his wont for years, he asks of God wisdom, practical guidance. "What wilt thou have me to do?" is the simple prayer of his trustful, submissive spirit. And when the response is given, instantly he obeys the direction, to go to Hebron. B.

The central position of Hebron in the tribe of Judah, its mountainous and defensible situation, its importance as a priestly settlement and an ancient royal city, the patriarchal associations connected with it, combined to render it the most suitable capital for the new kingdom, while the North was held partly by the Philistines, partly by Saul's adherents. In its neighborhood, moreover, David had spent a considerable part of his fugitive life, and gained many supporters. A. F. K.

3, 4. *The second anointing at Hebron.* In that then ancient city, crowning the loftiest eminence of the mountain ridge of Judah, which had been the place of Abraham's abode, and where he received the covenant promise of Jehovah, which had been the home of Isaac and Rebekah, and where the Patriarchs were buried, which long afterward had been conquered, and possessed as God's special gift, by Caleb, the like-minded companion of Joshua in the earliest years of Israel's wandering, of whose stainless life we have the Divine record, "He followed the Lord fully," the city which had subsequently been the metropolis of the tribe of Judah, in that central city of greatest historic memories, David was received with welcome, and by acclamation of the tribe at once anointed "King over the house of Judah." B.

The language of the history seems rather to imply a disbanding of his army, or at least their settling down to domestic life in the villages round Hebron, without a thought of winning the kingdom by arms. And his elevation to the partial monarchy which he at first possessed was the spontaneous act of "the men of Judah," who come to him and anoint him king over Judah. The limits of his territory are substantially those of the kingdom over which his descendants ruled after Jeroboam's revolt, thus indicating the existence of a natural "line of cleavage" between north and south. The geographical position of Benjamin finally attached it to the latter monarchy ; but for the present, the wish to retain the supremacy which it had had while the king was one of the tribe, made it the nucleus of a feeble and lingering opposition to David, headed by Saul's cousin Abner, and rallying round his incompetent son Ishbosheth. A. M.

5-7. David's first act as king of Judah was to send an embassy to Jabesh-gilead to express his admiration of their noble loyalty to Saul. Nor does it detract from this mark of his generosity that, now their master was dead, he intimated his own elevation, to bespeak, if possible, their allegiance. The support of such men was well worth seeking. Besides, Jabesh-gilead was the capital of the whole of that district ; and already the standard had there been set up of a rival, whose claims were neither founded on the appointment of God nor on the choice of the people. A. E.

8-10. The next event recorded is Abner's proclamation of Ishbosheth, the eldest surviving son of Saul, as king over Gilead, the Ashurites, the valley of Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin, and nominally over all Israel ; his residence was at Mahanaim, east of Jordan. It is added that Ishbosheth was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and that he reigned two years. Now, as we cannot suppose an interval of five years from his death to David's full recognition, and as the Philistines were in full possession of all Israel west of Jordan except where David's power extended, it would seem that Abner was occupied for five years or more in recovering the territory of the other tribes from them, after which the two years of Ishbosheth begin to be reckoned, so as to end just before David's full recognition as king of all Israel. P. S. — Abner was a soldier of consummate ability, and he not only succeeded in securing the acknowledgment of the authority of Ishbosheth in Gilead, but wresting successively "Gilead, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benja-

min, and [with the exception of Judah] all Israel" from the Philistines, he raised him at last to a position which, if Ishbosheth himself had had any capacity, would have rendered him a formidable rival to David. *W. Lee.*—It shows how entirely David submitted himself to the Divine guidance, that he made no attempt to grasp the rest of the kingdom, and did not oppose the setting up of Ishbosheth as Saul's successor, but waited for God to give him the kingdom in His own way. *Plummer.*—Conflict did indeed arise; but through an attempt of Abner upon the kingdom of Judah, not of David upon that of Ishbosheth. *Kit.*

12. In the commencement of the war, the first step was taken by Abner. He went out from Mahanaim, descended the Jordan Valley, and came to Gibeon, in the tribe of Benjamin, a place but a few miles distant from Gibeah, where Saul had reigned. His immediate object probably was to gain such an advantage over David in that quarter as would enable him to establish Ishbosheth at Gibeah, and thus bring to him all the prestige due to the son and successor of Saul. *W. G. B.*

13. It is now that Joab first appears on the scene. He was the eldest and the most remarkable of David's three nephews, who, as we have shown, stood to him rather in the relation of cousin, from the interval of age between their mother and David, her youngest brother. Asahel was the darling of his brothers, and would have doubtless won a high place among the heroes of his youthful uncle's army. Abishai was thoroughly loyal and faithful to David, even before the adherence of Joab,—like Joab, implacable to the enemies of the royal house; unlike Joab, faithful to the end. But Joab with those ruder qualities combined something of a more statesmanlike character, which brings him more nearly on a level with David, and gives him the second place in the whole coming history. *Stanley.*

14. Both the commanders under David and Ishbosheth were so inured to blood, that they make but a sport of killing. Custom makes sin so familiar that the horror of it is to some turned into pleasure: "Come, let the young men play before us." Abner is the challenger, and speeds the worse; for though in the matches of duel both sides miscarried, yet in the following conflict Abner and his men are beaten. *Bp. H.*

15-23. The Pool of Gibeon, on the opposite sides of which the armies encamped, was made memorable by the deadly combat of twelve Benjamites against twelve men of Judah, in which each man seized his adversary by the head with one hand, and with the other thrust his

sword through his side, so that all of them fell down dead together. The scene of this mutual slaughter received the name of Helkath-hazzurim (*the field of the strong men*). In the battle which ensued, the men of Israel were routed. Abner himself was closely pursued by Asahel, one of the three sons of Zeruiah, who were as swift-footed as the wild roe. Unable to escape, and unwilling to kill Asahel, Abner twice entreated him to go after some one else, that he might have spoils to carry back with him; but, as Asahel persisted, Abner thrust him through with the hinder end of his spear. *P. S.*

26. In the speech of Abner to Joab, there occurs an expression worthy of being taken out of its connection and of being viewed with wider reference. "Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?" How many of the miseries and how many of the worst sins of men come of forgetting the "bitterness in the latter end" which evil beginnings give rise to! It is one of the most wholesome rules of life never to do to-day what you shall repent of to-morrow. Yet how constantly is the rule disregarded! *W. G. B.*

27, 28. Joab, though a conqueror, generously sounds a retreat, knowing very well his master's mind and how averse he was to the shedding of blood. He justly upbraids Abner with his forwardness to engage; he lays the blame upon him that there had been so much blood shed as there was; "*Unless thou hadst spoken*"—that is, "hadst given order to fight, hadst bidden the young men arise and play before us, none of us had struck a stroke, nor drawn a sword against our brethren. We had retired in the morning, if thou hadst not given the challenge." This might have served to excuse Joab, if he had pushed on his victory, and made a full end of Abner's forces; but he very honorably put a stop to the pursuit, and suffered Abner to make an orderly retreat. *H.*

29-32. If Joab had known what was to follow, he might have taken a different course. If he had foreseen the "long war" that was to be between the house of Saul and the house of David, he might have tried on this occasion to strike a decisive blow, and pursued Abner's men until they were utterly broken. But that day's work had probably sickened him, as he knew it would sicken David; and leaving Abner and his people to make their way across the Jordan, he returned to bury his brother, and to report his proceedings to David at Hebron. *W. G. B.*

This is the only battle on record between the parties contending for the succession to the throne of Israel. David wisely adopted the

policy of conciliation and "masterly inactivity," waiting, as he had trained himself to wait during the life of Saul, for the slow movements of God's providence to seat him in his own time on the throne over the whole people. H. C. —Remaining quietly at Hebron, as during the long period of his persecution, so now in this protracted period of comparative rest, David's trust and patience of soul are strengthened and matured by simple unbroken waiting upon God's direction, waiting to know His further will. And these chapters show how, without one act of David, events were shaped in Providence to accomplish that will in David's final enthronement over all Israel. B.

The summary narrative of these seven years presents the still youthful king in a very lovable light. The same temper which had marked his first acts after Saul's death is strikingly brought out. He seems to have left the conduct of the war altogether to Joab, as if he shrank from striking a single blow for his own advancement. When he does interfere, it is on the side of peace, to curb and chastise ferocious vengeance and dastardly assassination. The incidents recorded all go to make up a picture of rare generosity, of patient waiting for God to fulfil His purposes, of longing that the miserable strife between the tribes of God's inheritance should end. A. M.

Section 257.

ABNER BRINGS OVER ALL ISRAEL TO DAVID, AND IS MURDERED BY JOAB.
ASSASSINATION OF ISHBOSHETH.

2 SAMUEL 3 : 1-39 ; 4 : 1-12.

3 1 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David : and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

Verses 2-5. *Sons born to David in Hebron.*

6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David,
7 that Abner made himself strong in the house of Saul. Now Saul had a concubine, whose
name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah : and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou
8 gone in unto my father's concubine ? Then was Abner very wroth for the words of *Ish-bosheth*, and said, Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah ? This day do I shew kindness
unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered
thee into the hand of David, and yet thou chargest me this day with a fault concerning this
9 woman. God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as the LORD hath sworn to David, I do not
10 even so to him ; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of
11 David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba. And he could not answer
Abner another word, because he feared him.

Verses 12-16. *Abner proposes to "bring all Israel" to David. As a condition David requires the return of Michal ; and she is sent back.*

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, In times past ye sought for
18 David to be king over you : now then do it : for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By
the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines,
19 and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin :
and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel,
20 and to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men
21 with him. And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. And Abner said
unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may
make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And
David sent Abner away ; and he went in peace.

Verses 22-27. *Joab reproaches David for his dealing with Abner. Luring Abner back by a deceitful message, Joab murders him in the gate of Hebron.*

28 And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the
29 LORD forever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner : let it fall upon the head of Joab, and

upon all his father's house ; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and
32 gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron : and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Ab-
33 ner ; and all the people wept. And the king lamented for Abner, and said,
Should Abner die as a fool dieth ?

34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters :

As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.

35 And all the people wept again over him. And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day ; but David sware, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if I taste
36 bread, or aught else, till the sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased
37 them : as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said
38 unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ?
39 And I am this day weak, though anointed king ; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me : the Lord reward the wicked doer according to his wickedness.

Ch. 4 : 1-12. Murder of Ishbosheth, and execution of the murderers by David.

3 : 1. "There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David." The war was not carried on by pitched battles, but by a series of fretting and worrying skirmishes. But the drift of things was manifest. "David waxed stronger and stronger ; but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." The cause of the house of Saul was weak because God was against it ; it was weak in its champion Ishbosheth ; its only element of strength was Abner, and even he could not make head against such odds. W. G. B.

2-5. The list of David's sons born in Hebron appears to interrupt the course of the narrative here, but it is quite in accordance with the usual practice of Old Testament historians to insert information about the family of a king at critical points in the history of his reign, and moreover it is in place here as a practical evidence of the strengthening of David's house. A. F. K.

Of how many grievous sins and sorrows did he sow the seed when he thus multiplied wives to himself ! We do not hesitate to ascribe to the life of David an influence on successive generations on the whole pure and elevating ; but it is impossible not to own that by many, a justification of relaxed principle and unchaste living has been drawn from his example. W. G. B.

6-11. *Quarrel between Abner and Ishbosheth.* Ishbosheth was evidently weak and incapable, a mere puppet in the hands of Abner, who had made himself the mainstay of Saul's house, partly from his family connection, partly with a view to secure the greatest amount of influence, possibly with the hope of eventually becoming king himself. At length, foreseeing the

impossibility of continuing a successful opposition to David's growing power, he took the opportunity of a quarrel with Ishbosheth to make such overtures to David as might secure him favorable terms and an influential position. A. F. K.

9. As the Lord hath sworn to David. Abner is self-convicted by these words. He knew that the Lord had sworn to give the throne to David, and yet he had resisted—consciously resisted—to the best of his power, the fulfilment of that high decree. He now reaps his reward in this—that his return to what was really his duty bears the aspect of treachery, meanness, and dishonor. *Kit.*—

12. Even now there is no trace of humility in the language of Abner. He approaches King David, not as one who has done him a great wrong, but as one who offers to do him a great favor. There is no word of regret for his having opposed what he knew to be God's purpose and promise, no apology for the disturbance he had wrought in Israel, no excuse for all the distress which he had caused to David by keeping the kingdom and the people at war. He does not come as a rebel to his sovereign, but as one independent man to another. Make a league with me. Secure me from punishment ; promise me a reward. For this he simply offers to place at David's disposal that powerful hand of his that had been so mighty for evil. W. G. B.

13. David's reasons for demanding the restoration of Michal were probably genuine affection for the wife of his youth who had saved his life, a desire to efface the slight put upon him by the deprivation, and a wish to conciliate

the good-will of the northern tribes by an alliance with Saul's family.

14. David sent messengers to Ishbosheth. The acceptance of the condition by Abner is implied, but the formal demand was made from Ishbosheth, who was powerless to resist the will of his master. Thus the restoration of Michal took place openly as a public act of justice ; it clearly exhibited the strength of David and the weakness of Ishbosheth ; it gave Abner opportunity to go to Hebron as Michal's escort, and mature his plans for deposing Ishbosheth. A. F. K.

17-21. Abner set himself with great vigor to fulfil the promise made by him in his league with David. First, he held communication with the representatives of the whole nation, "the elders of Israel," and showed to them his own self-condemnation, how God had designated David as the king through whom deliverance would be granted to Israel from the Philistines and all their other enemies. Next, remembering that Saul was a member of the tribe of Benjamin, he took special pains to attach that tribe to David, and as he was himself likewise a Benjamite, he must have been eminently useful in this service. Thirdly, he went in person to Hebron, David's seat, "to speak in the ears of David all that seemed good to Israel and to the whole house of Benjamin." Finally, after being entertained by David at a great feast, he set out to bring about a meeting of the whole congregation of Israel, that they might solemnly ratify the appointment of David as king, in the same way as, in the early days of Saul, Samuel had convened the representatives of the nation at Gilgal. That in all this Abner was rendering a great service both to David and the nation cannot be doubted. He was doing what no other man in Israel could have done at the time for establishing the throne of David and ending the civil war.

22-27. In these measures Joab had not been consulted. When Abner was at Hebron, Joab was absent on a military enterprise. In that enterprise he had been very successful, and had brought back a large amount of spoil. When he heard of David's agreement with Abner he was highly displeased. His rudeness to David is highly offensive. He speaks to him in the tone of those servants who rule their master, as if he were accountable to Joab, and not Joab to him. Of the king's answer to Joab nothing is recorded ; but from David's confession (verse 39) that the sons of Zeruiah were too strong for him, we may infer that it was not very firm or decided, and that Joab set it utterly at nought. For the

very first thing that Joab did after seeing the king was to send a message to Abner, most likely in David's name but without David's knowledge, asking him to return. Joab was at the gate ready for his treacherous business, and taking Abner aside as if for private conversation, he plunged his dagger in his breast, ostensibly in revenge for the death of his brother Asahel. There was something eminently mean and dastardly in the deed. Abner was now on the best of terms with Joab's master, and he could not have apprehended danger from the servant. The laws of hospitality were outraged when one who had just been David's guest was assassinated in David's city. The outrage was all the greater, as was also the injury to King David and to the whole kingdom, that the crime was committed when Abner was on the eve of negotiation with the other tribes of Israel. W. G. B.

Joab's act was not justifiable on the score of blood-revenge. This was merely a convenient pretext for getting rid of a dangerous rival. He foresaw that if he allowed Abner to have the credit of placing the crown of Israel on David's head, he would lose his own position and influence. Failing in his endeavor to persuade David that Abner was playing him false, with characteristic unscrupulousness he planned this deliberate and treacherous murder, as on a later occasion he murdered his rival Amasa (ch. 20 : 10). A. F. K.—Abner, who promises kingdoms (verse 10), cannot secure to himself one certain hour of life. David had sent him away, and he departed in peace ; but, being called back by Joab, he fell. *Delaney.*

28. I and my kingdom are guiltless. With a strong asseveration David asserts his entire innocence of any complicity in this murder. Neither upon himself personally nor upon "his kingdom"—*i e*, the royal house, his descendants and successors, could punishment for shedding this innocent blood justly fall. A. F. K.

29. That Joab deserved to die for his dastardly crime, none could have denied ; if David abstained from inflicting that punishment, it was only natural that he should be very emphatic in proclaiming what such a criminal might look for, in never-failing visitations on himself and his seed, when he was left to be dealt with by the God of justice. W. G. B.—David ought to have done his duty, and trusted God with the issue. If the law had had its course against Joab, perhaps the murder of Ishbosheth, Amnon, and others had been prevented. It was carnal policy and cruel pity that spared Joab. Righteousness supports the throne, and will

never shake it. Yet it was only a reprieve that David gave to Joab ; on his death-bed, he left it to Solomon (who could the better wield the sword of justice, because he had no occasion to draw the sword of war) to avenge the blood of Abner. Evil pursues sinners, and will overtake them at last. David preferred Abner's son Jaasiel (1 Chron. 27 : 21). H.

37. All the people and all Israel. Not only David's own subjects in Judah, but the people of the northern kingdom, who must have been specially aggrieved by the murder of their hero, recognized the sincerity of David's grief, and acquitted him of all complicity in the act. A. F. K.

The people were pleased with the evidence afforded of David's feelings, and the event that had seemed likely to destroy his prospects turned out in this way in his favor. "The people took notice of this, and it pleased them, as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." It was another evidence of the conquering power of goodness and forbearance. By his generous treatment of his foes, David secured a position in the hearts of his people, and established his kingdom on a basis of security which he could not have obtained by any amount of severity.

4 : 1-8. Ishbosheth, in setting up a claim to the throne in opposition to the Divine call of David, not only lost the distinction he coveted, but also his life. One day, while lying in his bed at noon, he was despatched by two of his servants. The two men that murdered him seem to have been among those whom Saul enriched with the spoil of the Gibeonites. They were brothers, men of Beeroth, which was formerly one of the cities of the Gibeonites, but was now reckoned to Benjamin. Mistaking the character of David as much as it had been mistaken by the Amalekite who pretended that he had slain Saul, they hastened to Hebron, bearing with them the head of their victim, a ghastly evidence of the reality of the deed. This revolting trophy they carried all the way from Mahanaim to Hebron, a distance of some fifty miles. W. G. B.

9-11. If David had put the Amalekite to death for merely saying that he had slain Saul, even at his own command, how much more

would he take signal vengeance of their united treachery and murder? The Amalekite might have some ground of vengeance against Saul, in respect of the destruction he had wrought upon his nation ; but what had they—the trusted servants of Ishbosheth, the appointed guardians of his life—what had they to allege against their master? *Kit.*—David's behavior in this treatment of the murderers of Ishbosheth was not only an act of justice in itself, but it publicly declared that he would never be served by treachery and murder, nor ever forgive such crimes, however the pretence for committing them might be for his own interest and service. The concern he expressed for the death of Ishbosheth, especially for the manner of it, "in his own house upon his bed," argued humanity and honor, and an utter abhorrence of villains and their crimes. *Chandler.*

And thus at last, not by his own act, but through circumstances over which he had had no control,—allowed by Him who gives full liberty to each man, though He overrules even the darkest deeds of the wicked for the evolving of good—David was left undisputed claimant to the throne of Israel. Faith, patience, and integrity were vindicated ; the Divine promises to David had come true in the course of natural events—and all this was better far than even if Saul had voluntarily resigned his place, or Abner succeeded in his plans.

The Divine principle of monarchy was that *the will of the earthly should be in avowed subjection to that of the heavenly King.* This was right in itself ; it was expressive of the covenant-relationship by which Jehovah became the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Jehovah ; and it embodied the typical idea of the kingdom of God, to be fully realized in the *King* of the Jews, who came not to do His own will. *Saul was the king after Israel's own heart ; David the king after God's own heart,* not because of his greater piety or goodness, but because, despite his failings and his sins, he fully embodied the Divine idea of Israel's kingdom ; and for this reason also he and his kingdom were the type of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His kingdom. A. E.

Section 258.

DAVID'S THIRD ANOINTING, AT HEBRON, AS KING OVER ALL ISRAEL, BY A GREAT HOST FROM ALL THE TRIBES. JERUSALEM CAPTURED AND MADE HIS CAPITAL.

2 SAMUEL 5 : 1-10. 1 CHRONICLES 11 : 1-9 ; 12 : 23-40.

2 S. 5 : 1 THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel : and the LORD thy God said to thee, Thou shalt feed [or, *be shepherd of*] my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince [or, *leader*] over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron ; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD : and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Samuel.

4, 5 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months : and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

1 Chron. 12 : 23 And these are the numbers of the heads of them that were armed for war, which came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.

Verses 24-37. *Numbers of the armed men of the several tribes.*

38 All these, being men of war, that could order the battle array, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel : and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking : for their brethren had made preparation for them. Moreover they that were nigh unto them, even as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, victual of meal, cakes of figs, and clusters of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep in abundance : for there was joy in Israel.

In the remaining text we harmonize 2 S. 5 : 6-10, and 1 Chron. 11 : 4-9.

And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (the same is Jebus) ; and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither : thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion ; the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, There are the blind and the lame ; he cannot come into the house. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and was made chief. And David dwelt in the stronghold ; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, from Millo even round about and inward : and Joab repaired the rest of the city. And David waxed greater and greater ; for the LORD of hosts was with him.

The consummation to which events in God's Providence had been leading was now come. Saul and Jonathan, Abner and Ishbosheth, were all dead ; there was no one of the house of Saul capable of taking the lead ; David was already head of a very large portion of Israel ; the Philistines, and perhaps the remnants of the Canaanites, were restless and threatening ; and it was obviously the interest of the Israelitish nation to unite themselves under the sovereignty of the valiant and virtuous son of Jesse, their former deliverer, and the man designated by the

Word of God as their Captain and Shepherd. *Bib. Com.*

2 S. 5 : 1-5. *David's final anointing and establishment as King of all Israel.* Moved by a unanimity of spirit,—wrought indirectly and largely by the severe Providences through which they had been led, but effectually seconded by the Spirit of God, stirring into fresh glow the fire of devout patriotism through the remembrance of God's great promises and deeds in their behalf as a people,—an immense representation from all the tribes came to David at He-

bron. Three hundred thousand men (1 Chron. 12 : 23-40), gathered in convocation, expressed their desire for national unity, recognized his personal fitness for the throne, called to mind the days in which he so valiantly and successfully led the armies of Saul, frankly admitted and gladly accepted his Divine appointment to the kingdom (which, it plainly appears, they all, like Abner, had long understood); then, by their elders, entered into solemn covenant with David—the covenant being as solemnly accepted by him—and finally, “*before the Lord they anointed David King over Israel.*” The seven years of patient waiting in Hebron, years of trustful submission to God’s will, years of forbearance with the disunited tribes, even in their warfare against himself, years of Divine inward maturing of his own spiritual character, years of wise, faithful, foundation work in teaching and training the people of Judah, these long secluded years of patient waiting were not in vain. According to God’s plan, by the interworking of his Providence and Spirit, they had borne abundant fruit of good, and now had established him in the kingdom. And, let us not fail to remark it in passing, in the actual result, in the methods by which it was brought about, crowned and completed as these methods were by the spontaneous united action of the tribes, we find one of the most extended and effective illustrations in all history of the perfect accord of human freedom with Divine sovereignty; of voluntary human action in the widest combination of varying interests and events, in the end concentrating upon the fulfilment of Divine purpose and prediction. A kindred illustration we read in that other greater event in the history of David’s Son and Lord, His elevation through the Cross to a universal everlasting throne as the Redeemer King! B.

It is interesting to notice the grounds on which the elders offered him the crown (verses 1-3). He possessed the general but requisite qualification of being one of themselves—“*Thou art our bone and our flesh.*” He had been in former times their leader, and had proved himself worthy to be their king: “*In time past, when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.*” But above all, the Lord had nominated him to the kingdom: “*The Lord said to thee, thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be captain over Israel.*” They knew this seven years ago as well as they knew it then, and their acknowledgment is somewhat tardy. It is, however, satisfactory to find them so distinctly placing his nomination on this footing; and the acknowl-

edgment of the constitutional validity of his claim to the throne is important. David then “*made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord.*” Certain conditions were agreed to on both sides, defining his rights and theirs; and where such conditions exist, the monarchy is constitutional, not absolute. The conditions were doubtless such as had been established by Samuel, forming something like a coronation oath—which all future kings seem to have taken at their accession, although the limitations it involved do not appear to have been very exactly observed by all of them—the tendency of all power in the East, however formally limited, being toward absolutism. David was then anointed king over all Israel—being the third anointing he had received. *Kit.*

Thus, without any advantage of birth, without any dexterous scheming or violent revolution, in ripeness of mind and body, at the moment when he was most needed, the greatest man of the age reached the highest position in it, the headship over the whole of God’s chosen people. The shepherd-lad, musician, courtier, warrior, poet, outlaw, and tribal king, had reached the throne of united Israel. He had experienced the trials of solitary watching in the wilderness, of jealousies and plots at court, of being hunted like a wild beast in the mountains, of being an exile in the land of Israel’s deadliest enemies. There remained the severest trial of all, the possession of supreme power. *Plummer.*

1 Chron. 12 : 23-38. Here is a record of the numbers from each of the tribes who had espoused the cause of David. But besides giving the numbers from each tribe, it often briefly characterizes them. Thus the two hundred captains of Issachar are described as men “*who had understanding of the times so that they could see what Israel ought to do*”—men, *i.e.*, of fine political sagacity; “*and all their brethren acted according to their mouth*”—*i.e.*, took the advice of these skilful statesmen. The fifty thousand of Zebulun are described as “*expert in war, and in the use of all weapons of war,*” as men “*who could keep rank, because they were not of a heart and a heart, because they were animated by a single overmastering purpose, by an entire and perfect devotion.* In each man, as in the whole army, there was a single and supreme aim. When the chronicler sums up, he says of the whole three hundred thousand what he had already said of the fifty thousand of Zebulun: “*All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel.*” No wonder that they succeeded in

their aim. Three hundred thousand men who knew how to keep rank, and were of a single heart, might still overturn a kingdom, if not overrun the world. And it is this unity of heart, this singleness of motive and purpose, which is still the secret of order and victory. The secret of unity in our individual lives is one with the secret of unity in a camp or an army. We bring order and peace into our lives as we become of one heart, and a perfect heart before God. *Cox.*

38-40. And now Hebron witnessed a wondrous and joyful spectacle. The nation, wearied with war and persuaded toward David, not only send their elders, but in counted thousands and ten thousands come themselves, to crown him king over the whole country. The choice men, not only of the neighboring tribes of Simeon and Benjamin and Ephraim, but also of the tribes beyond the Jordan, and of Issachar in the plain of Esdraelon, and of the three tribes still farther north—all flock to Hebron, bringing “bread and meat, meal-cakes of figs and bunches of raisins, and wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly;” “on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen.” This valley before Hebron and these hills surrounding it were doubtless covered with the joyful multitudes keeping the coronation festival and celebrating the praises of the new king of the united country. *N. C. B.*

2 S. 6-10; 1 Chron. 11: 4-9. *Jerusalem chosen as the Capital.* David—now thirty-eight years old—was established as king over Israel. A capital for the new kingdom was next to be chosen. This should contain the royal residence, should be the established seat of government and worship, and so be regarded as the centre of the national unity. A new site was desirable, in which all the tribes might have a common interest. Such a locality was chosen in the natural stronghold of Jebus, on the borders of Benjamin and Judah. For four hundred years it had withstood Israel's assault. The situation combined beauty with strength, in both far surpassing any other city on earth. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,” David justly said of it in its splendor. Between deep gorges on either side and on the south, and with a depressed valley on the north, rose up lofty elevations. The highest point, and most impregnable, was that so long held by the Jebusites, afterward called the hill of Zion. It was on the southwest of, and a hundred feet above, the whole city area. This fastness was taken by Joab, after its defenders had scornfully taunted David with the folly of

his attempt to subdue it. Upon the next highest hill, on the east, Moriah, Abraham had erected the altar of sacrifice for Isaac, a type of the after sacrifice on Calvary. And upon Moriah the three Temples were afterward built. The name, Jerusalem, has been interpreted, Inheritance of Peace. And now at its founding, we remember that the hill of Zion, the Temple structure, and the City itself, after bearing distinguished and memorable part in the sublime associations of all the centuries to Christ, are reproduced in the apocalyptic symbols of the heavenly city. Thus in its duration, its wonderful yet incomplete history, and its typical connections with the heavenly state, we find ground for peculiar interest in Jerusalem, the City of the great King. *B.*

So great was their confidence in the natural strength of their citadel that the Jebusites believed the blind and lame of their number were adequate for its defence. Subsequently these words passed into a proverb: Because of the blind and the lame, he shall not enter the house; or as given by Perowne: “The blind and the lame are there; let him enter if he can.” Joab was the first to master the ascent and thus secure the honor of being David's chief captain. The reference to “the watercourse” suggests that the ascent was made through some water-worn passage. The citadel once mastered, David proceeded to enlarge the area of this lofty summit and to strengthen its fortifications. *H. C.*

From Millo and inwards. The fortification “inwards” must have consisted in the enclosure of Mount Zion with a strong wall upon the north side, where Jerusalem joins it as a lower town, so as to defend the place against hostile attacks on the north or town side. The “Millo” was at any rate some kind of fortification, probably a large tower or castle. The definite article before *Millo* indicates that it was a well-known fortress, probably one that had been erected by Jebusites. *Keil.*

The City of Jerusalem, said by the monkish writers to be the centre of the earth, is emphatically the centre of Palestine. It is exactly on the watershed of the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, 2650 feet above the level of the former: a truly mountain city. Built on the very backbone of the country—the summit of that long ridge which traverses the Holy Land from north to south, and only approachable by wild mountain roads—the position of the city was one of great natural strength. The twin hills of Zion and Moriah are enclosed, excepting on the north, by the ravines of *Hinnom* and of

Kedron. They rise to the north of Jerusalem, very near each other. The westernmost, the *Valley of Hinnom*, runs southward for a mile and a quarter, skirting the city of David to the west, then turns suddenly to the east, and, passing through a deep gorge, joins the *Kedron* at Bir Eyub, a deep well, southeast of the city. The *Valley of Kedron* or *Jehoshaphat*, *Wady en Nâr*, beginning to the north of the city, runs eastward for a mile and a half, and then makes a sharp bend southward, skirting the Mount Moriah, separating it from the Mount of Olives, and rapidly descends, till, at its junction with the Valley of Hinnom, it is 670 feet below its original starting-point. H. B. T. (For diagrams, etc., see pp. 660-63, New Testament, Vol. I.)

Here David established his seat of government, and centuries of history have ratified the wisdom of his choice. The creation of the national capital is therefore contemporaneous with the establishment of the monarchy in its complete form, and both are the work of David. That it should be called "the city of David" was doubly justified by his having captured it, and by the use he made of it. Strategically its position is very strong. Most of the approaches to it are too intricate and precipitous for large armies; and the one that is least so, the one that has almost invariably been used by hostile armies, is very circuitous—from Jaffa and Lydda, over the pass of the Beth-horons to Gibeon, and thence over the hills to the north side of Jerusalem. History shows that the armies of Egypt and Assyria often marched by along the plain, and sometimes fought there, without in any way interfering with Jerusalem. *Plummer*.

Thus Jerusalem was *the* city of David, born to

greatness in the first year of his reign over all Israel. In the result it came to be more richly embalmed in sacred song and hallowed with more sweet associations and blessed memories than any other city brought before us in the holy Scriptures; indeed, we might say, above any other city known to history. H. C.—Zion was memorable because it was God's dwelling-place, Jerusalem because it was the city of the great King. If Jerusalem and Zion impress our imagination even above other places, it is because God had so much to do with them. We recall the unrivalled moral and spiritual forces that were concentrated there: the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of the martyrs, the glorious company of the apostles, all living under the shadow of Mount Zion, and uttering those words that have moved the world as they received them from the mouth of the Lord. We recall Him who claimed to be Himself God, whose blessed lessons, and holy life, and atoning death were so closely connected with Jerusalem, and would alone have made it forever memorable. Century after century, millennium after millennium has passed; and still Zion and Jerusalem draw all eyes and hearts. W. G. B.

Established at Jerusalem as his capital, David reigns for some ten years with unbroken prosperity over a loyal and loving people, with this for the summary of the whole period, "David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him." These years are marked by three principal events—the bringing up of the ark to the city of David, the promise by Nathan of the perpetual dominion of his house, and the unbroken flow of victories over the surrounding nations. A. M.

Section 259.

"NAMES OF THE MIGHTY MEN WHOM DAVID HAD" DURING HIS OUTLAW LIFE AND AT HEBRON, AND SOME OF THEIR HEROIC DEEDS.

2 SAMUEL 21 : 15-22 ; 23 : 8-39. 1 CHRONICLES 11 : 10-47 ; 12 : 1-22 ; 20 : 4-8.

WE have here a very particular account of the valiant men who had previously attached themselves to David, some at least of whom came to him at Ziklag before the death of Saul; men who had wrought signal exploits of heroism and power, and were thoroughly prepared to lead the armies of Israel. H. C.—From the long list

of David's "mighty men," it appears that the nation must have been singularly rich in warlike heroes—a circumstance due in some degree to the example of David himself. He appears to have established something like a legion of honor, or order of valor, embracing different classes, like the military and civil

orders of the present day. His own military ardor seems to have passed by a kind of electric current into his followers, animating them with the same spirit as his own. W. G. B.

2 S. 23 : 10. Eleazar, one of the three mighty men of David's army, threw himself, sword in hand, into the battle against the Philistines ; and when he grew weary and turned aside to rest, he found that the fingers of his right hand would not unclasp themselves from the handle of his sword. The hero's fingers had become set by his strong grasp of his weapon ; and when he let fall his arm, his hand still clave unto his sword. This vivid and impressive picture suggests an instructive lesson both for our temporal and spiritual life. Is there not such a grasp of the principles of honor and integrity, of the truths of God and His Word, and of the responsibilities of Christian service, that no trouble, nor doubt, nor temptation, shall be able to unclasp our hold ? For such instruction, we may believe this simple but graphic incident was recorded. Eleazar teaches men, in their worldly occupations, with what grasp to lay hold of the principles of honor and integrity. There is a grasping of the principles of high and noble living among men in the every-day battle of business life ; so that the invisible fingers of human character, clasping them around, grow firm and fixed until temptation has no power to separate us from them. Then Eleazar teaches us how to grasp the truths of God and His Word. Take hold of God's warnings and encouragements, as though they were worth something, and we will find, to our relief and joy, when wearied and tried by battling with a world of disappointment and evil, that our hand still cleaves to them. And taking hold of these blessed, uplifting truths of God's Word, as Eleazar took hold of his sword, there will be no annoyance or pain in the grasp ; and when wearied, as you will sometimes be, unable longer to resist the enemies of your hope, like Job the patriarch and Paul the apostle, your hand will still be clasped around the unfailing promises of your Heavenly Father. And so should we grasp the responsibilities and known duties of the Christian service. Given Eleazar's grasp of the responsibilities of Christian service, and there would be full churches, full prayer-meetings ; multitudes now careless inquiring the way to Zion ; souls now dumb singing the joys of salvation ; Christians now weak, doubting, and despairing, happy, confident, strong, and, further, the veteran believer who has thus grasped these truths and duties through his life, finds toward its close that they

still cleave to him when everything else lets go. When old age comes on with its weakness and decrepitude, the interest in worldly things diminishes, the mind begins to let go of the world. But the heart of the devoted Christian still clings with the old tenacity to the things of God and the interests of eternity. It is the crown and glory of our theme that, when the Christian mind and heart let go of all things else in their weakness and weariness, they still cleave to God and Heaven. C. C. Hemenway.

1 S. 23 : 15, 16. During the wars with the Philistines David, heated with the sun while scanning the hosts of his enemies, suddenly gave expression to a desire for water from the well of Bethlehem. " Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate ! " He had probably been thinking of his boyhood, and gave utterance to this, which was a sort of passionate outburst of home longing. It was just like David with his intense nature to speak and act in the way recorded in these verses. Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah determine that his wish for the water shall be gratified, and they plan their sortie with caution, and carry it out with courage and celerity. At dusk they steal up, break through the lines of the enemy, overpowering and silencing the sentinels, and reach the well at last. Two defend the one who draws the water, then, putting it into a skin, that one slings it over his shoulder, and they fight their way out of the surrounding host, bearing the water to the king. F. Hastings. — Here was a striking proof of the enthusiasm which David inspired in his followers, and a noble instance of the true spirit of chivalry, which fears no danger and shrinks from no self-sacrifice, in order to do the smallest service for the object of its devotion ; the spirit which is perfected in the highest example of love. A. F. K.

17. " He would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord ; " he saw in it but the blood of these brave men. In this incident at once the strong home affections which prompted the wish, and the womanly tenderness which shrunk from its gratification at so great a risk, are full of significance in relation to the degree in which the finer instincts of David's nature remained unaffected by the circumstances of his outlaw life at this time. W. Lee. — It had cost too much to be used for any common purpose or for mere personal gratification ; the only fit thing to do with it was to devote it to God. The incident teaches us that whatever comes to us at great cost should be sacred in our eyes, and should not be devoted

to any common, selfish or sinful use, but should be dedicated to the Lord. A most obvious application is to our own redeemed lives. Jesus broke through the lines of enemies and brought water fresh from the lost well of salvation. All the blessings and joys of our Christian faith reach us through the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. Can we devote these gifts and powers of our lives, ransomed at such cost, to any common end or use? Can we do otherwise with them than as David did with the water—make them holy offerings to God? Is any other use in keeping with their sacredness? "The Lord hath set apart the godly man for himself." The hands which take the sacramental emblems must do no unholy work. The lips that speak the vows of love and the words of prayer must utter no bitter words, no evil or impure words. The eye that is lifted up to look upon the suffering Lamb of God and upon the holy beauty of the exalted King must not linger an instant on anything that defileth. The heart that has been warmed by the consciousness of the love of God must not open to any foul thought or evil desire or unholy imagination. The life that has cost the blood of Jesus must be used to honor God and bless the world. It is too sacred to be devoted to any but holy service. We do good only at the cost of self. Christ blessed the world not by an easy, pleasant life, but by suffering and dying for it. We never can bless the world merely by having a good time in it; we can do it only through toils and sacrifices. The cup of sweet life that is before us we may not take and lightly drink, merely to quench our own thirst; it is the blood of those who before us went in jeopardy of their lives to win it, and we must treat it as sacred, pouring it before God in consecrated offering to bless other lives. *Presbyterian.*

1 Chron. 12: 16-18. Came of Benjamin and Judah. David meets these men with caution. Observe how fairly he deals with them. As they are, they shall find him; so shall all that deal with the son of David. If they be faithful and honorable, he will be their rewarder. Affection, respect, and service that are cordial and sincere, will find favor with a good man, as they do with a good God, though clogged with infirmities and turning to no great account. But if they be false, and come to betray him into the hands of Saul, he leaves them to God to be their Avenger, as He is and will be of everything that is treacherous and perfidious.

Amasai was their spokesman, on whom came a spirit of wisdom and resolution according to the occasion, putting words into his mouth which were proper both to give David satisfaction, and to animate those that accompanied him. Nothing could be said finer or more fitting. *Thine are we, David, and on thy side.* He wishes prosperity to David and his cause, praying for peace to him and all his friends and well wishers, *Peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers,* among whom we desire to be reckoned, that peace may be on us. *For thy God helpe'h thee;* God is thy God, and those that have him for their God have him for their Helper in every time of need and danger.

Christ, the Son of David, has worthies too, who, like David's, are influenced by his example, fight his battles against the spiritual enemies of his kingdom, and in his strength are more than conquerors. Christ's apostles were his immediate attendants, did and suffered great things for him, and at length came to reign with them. They are mentioned with honor in the New Testament, as these in the Old. Nay, all the good soldiers of Jesus Christ have their names better preserved than even these worthies have; for they are written in heaven. This honor have all his saints. H.

In the Hebrew memoirs one is brought face to face with actual facts, and we see the man as he is, not as his kindred or friends or countrymen would wish him to appear. Both sides of his career are given with equal simplicity and fulness. The same book which describes the generosity of David at the well by the gate of Bethlehem when the three heroes broke through the garrison and drew the coveted drink for him, recites also the hideous story of his dealing with Bathsheba and Uriah, the melancholy record of uncleanness and blood-shedding. The more closely the pages of these records are studied, the more evident it becomes that the reader has before him the veritable man himself as he would appear to Him who searches the heart and tries the reins. Not only are all the facts that are given true, but they are so given as to produce a correct impression, a point in which the most impartial and conscientious of merely human biographers are very apt to fail. *Chambers.*

Section 260.

DAVID'S PALACE AND FAMILY. HIS DOUBLE VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES.
KINDNESS TO THE SON OF JONATHAN.

2 SAMUEL 5 : 11-25 ; 9 : 1-13. 1 CHRONICLES 14 : 1-17.

2 S. 5 : 11 AND Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons : and they built David an house. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

Verses 13-16. *Wives taken and children born in Jerusalem.*

17 And when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David ; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. Now the **18** Philistines had come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines ? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand ? And the LORD said unto David, Go up : for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into **20** thine hand. And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there ; and he said, The LORD hath broken mine enemies before me, like the breach of waters. Therefore he **21** called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And they left their images there, and David and his men took them away.

1 Chron. 14 : 12 And David gave commandment, and they were burned with fire.

2 S. 5 : 22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

1 Chron. 14 : 14 And David inquired again of God ; and God said unto him, Thou shalt not go up after them : turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry **15** trees. And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle : for God is gone out before thee to smite the host **16** of the Philistines. And David did as God commanded him : and they smote the host of the **17** Philistines from Gibeon even to Gezer. And the fame of David went out into all lands : and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

2 S. 9 : 1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may **2** shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake ? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him unto David ; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba ? **3** And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him ? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath **4** yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he ? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. **5** Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from **6** Lo debar. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and fell on his face, and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Be- **7** hold, thy servant ! And David said unto him, Fear not : for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father ; and thou **8** shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he did obeisance, and said, What is thy servant, **9** that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am ? Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given unto **10** thy master's son. And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants ; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have bread to eat : but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons **11** and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he **12** shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. **13** So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem : for he did eat continually at the king's table ; and he was lame on both his feet.

2 S. 5 : 11. With a just and generous appreciation of David's Divine appointment to the throne, Hiram, King of Tyre, proposed to erect a palace for the royal residence. David assented, and the structure was erected, with all the art and beauty of the times. Thus was laid the foundation of a lasting friendship with Hiram, continued after David's death by Solomon. B.—When we look to the name borne by this prince—the first Phœnician mentioned by name in Scripture—we are at once struck with its authentic character. That Hiram was really a Phœnician name, and one which kings were in the habit of bearing, is certain from the Assyrian Inscriptions and from Herodotus, as well as from the Phœnician historians, Diodorus and Menander. And these last-named writers show moreover that the name was actually borne by the Tyrian king contemporary with Solomon and David, and they speak distinctly of the close connection between Hiram and Solomon ; adding facts, which, though not contained in Scripture, are remarkably in accordance with the sacred narrative. G. R.

11. Tyre. One of the two great cities of Phœnicia, celebrated for its commerce, its mechanical skill, and its wealth. When the Israelites entered Canaan, it was already noted for its strength (Josh. 19 : 29). Three causes co-operated to bring Phœnicia into close and friendly relation with Israel. (a) The contiguity of the countries, and the short distance between their capitals. From Tyre to Jerusalem by land was scarcely more than one hundred miles, so that intercourse was easy. (b) Similarity of language. Phœnician so closely resembles Hebrew, that it must have been readily intelligible to the Israelites. (c) Tyre depended upon Palestine for its supplies of wheat and oil, and in return sent to Jerusalem its articles of commerce, and provided skilled workmen for the buildings erected by David and Solomon. A. F. K.—This kind of intercourse accounts for the remarkable fact that the Phœnicians are the only neighboring nation with whom the Israelites never had any war. The Israelites could thus possess themselves in large abundance of the various foreign commodities which abounded in the Phœnician markets, while their diffusion through the land produced a marked change for the better in the attire, the arms and armor, the dwellings, the furniture, the domestic utensils, and probably the agricultural implements of the Hebrews. Of this we find frequent indications in the later books of Scripture. What was a convenience to the Hebrews became in time a vital necessity to the Phœnicians, and

always continued to be such. So late as the time of the Acts of the Apostles, we find the Phœnicians of Tyre taking the most earnest and even humiliating means of overcoming some resentment that Herod Agrippa had conceived against them, and why? "Because their country was nourished by the king's country" (Acts 12 : 20). *Kil.*

Build David an house. This was erected upon *Mount Zion*, the highest and the largest of the hills on which the city stood. The crest of Zion is more than three hundred feet above the Kedron at En-Rogel. It was the first spot in Jerusalem occupied by buildings. Probably the *Salem* of Melchizedek, Zion was certainly the *Jebus* of the Jebusites, and then the *City of David*. Here David built his palace, and for more than a thousand years the kings and the foreign rulers who succeeded him resided here. In it David constructed the Royal Sepulchre, where he and fourteen of his successors were laid in the grave. Zion was the last spot which held out against Titus and the Romans. When the Temple fortress had been stormed, the last remnant of the Jews crossed the Tyropæon by the bridge, and held the City of David and the old palace of their kings till the very last, and perished among its ruins. H. B. T.

12. And David perceived that the Lord had established him to be king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake. When David saw that all conspired steadily and harmoniously to the enlargement and establishment of his kingdom, he perceived that the Lord was with him, and was now visibly fulfilling to him that great principle of His government which He had so solemnly declared to Eli, "Them that honor Me, I will honor." W. G. B.—*David's kingdom was lifted up on high*, not for his own sake, that he might look great ; but because of his people Israel, that he might be a guide and protector to them. We are *therefore* blessed, that we may be blessings. We are not born, nor do we live, for ourselves. H.

David's early and later life illustrates to us the value of discipline to right character and conduct. In his earlier years, the long period of persecution and the patient waiting at Hebron, and in his later years, the sore visitations of God because of his fearful sin, were the means by which, first patience and fortitude, and then penitence and a deeper trust were wrought in his soul. But, apart from this teaching, the life and character of David interest and instruct us at every point. In his youth

he is brightest, noblest, most attractive. Then he is modest and manly, heroic and meek, wise, trustful, and devout. Faith prompts and nerves his acting, and humility quenches the natural pride and self-elation of victory or success. It is true, he failed again and again in the subsequent days of adversity, and therefore these days were lengthened that he might not only learn patience, but the higher lesson (the highest we all can learn) that *he and his life were not for himself but for God*. Well he learned this lesson, during the seven years of quiet waiting at Hebron, and never afterward was it forgotten, even in his greatest exaltation. Well may it be emphasized! This rare excellence in David was not simply the utter absence of self-will—by which indeed he was always distinguished—but higher and better than this, it was the conviction that himself, his faculties, gifts, possessions, and honors, his very crown and kingdom, all were supremely, entirely, for God's use and glory, not for his own. And no sin of David, many and enormous as were his sins, revealed the least forgetfulness of this, the least tendency unduly to exalt himself. B.—The king ruled so long as his throne was based upon righteousness; the moment he sought for any other foundation, he would become weak and contemptible. All David's discipline had been designed to settle him in this truth. He was the man after God's own heart, because he so graciously received that discipline and imbibed that truth. The signal sin of his life confirmed it still more mightily for himself and for all ages to come. *Maurice*.

13-16. "David took to him more concubines and wives" in Jerusalem. With all his light and grace, he had not overcome the prevalent notion that the dignity and resources of a kingdom were to be measured by the number and rank of the king's wives. W. G. B.—David stopped short of that fatal step contemplated in the warning of Moses, and taken by Solomon, of multiplying to himself wives from heathen nations, so as to turn away his heart from God; but the miseries he suffered in his family give the best answer to the folly which quotes Scripture in sanction of polygamy. P. S.

71-20. *David's first victory over the Philistines.* This warlike and powerful people had been for centuries the cause of Israel's sorest trials, since Joshua's death the chief hindrance to any approach to unity and consolidation of the tribes. The first necessity of the new government, the thing most essential not merely to peace and general prosperity among the tribes, but to their existence and homogeneous devel-

opment as a nation, was the utter overthrow of this long dominant and powerful foe. And the achievement of this overthrow was brought about, still under the overruling of God's Providence, first and foremost by the natural yet aggressive action of the Philistines themselves. So soon as they saw all Israel united under the only man who had in former days invariably vanquished their forces in conflict, they saw that their dominant power, nay, their very existence was threatened. At once, therefore, before time or opportunity could be given for the consolidation and training of the forces of Israel, they gather in mighty force in the Valley of Rephaim, southward from Jerusalem, on the frontier which separated Judah from all the other tribes. And now mark the trustful spirit and the dauntless courage of David, in meeting this immense array of Philistia. Well he still understands and believes that the battle is the Lord's, and that the people are the Lord's. So he *asks of the Lord* not merely *direction* to go against the Philistines, but a *Divine assurance* that the Lord will give him the victory. And with the certainty of success, wrought by his implicit faith in God, he leads his unprepared, unequal army to conflict and to an overwhelming victory. And then in the same faith (verse 20) he reverently and gratefully ascribes the success to Him whose interposition had assured it. B.

20, 21. David called the field of battle Baal-perazim—i.e., "God has by my hands scattered mine enemies." In this war the Philistines lost even their images, which must have reminded them of Israel's loss of the ark on a former occasion. David burned them. C. G. B.—By this David afforded sufficient evidence that he regarded hostility to idolatry as belonging to the functions of his office, being the only indication of practical hostility against the gods of the heathen, when not introduced for worship among the Israelites, that has hitherto appeared. *Kit*.

1 Chron. 14: 14-17. *Israel's final and decisive triumph over the Philistines.* With a yet more numerous and mightier force the Philistines return to the same battle-field. But now the Lord gave another answer to the inquiry of His anointed King. Now He will more directly and effectually interpose for the utter destruction of his people's enemies. He bids David set his army in ambush, aside from their foes, and declares that He will go before them and smite the host of the Philistines. But he commands that David shall follow up and complete the work of destruction. "*And David did so.*"

He obeyed the Divine direction, and God fulfilled his promise. The hosts of Philistia fled panic stricken from the field, and were pursued for a great distance with immense slaughter, so that their power was permanently broken. B.

Once more the sacred oracle was consulted, and this time he was forbidden to go out and assail them in front, but to fetch a compass, and to come out secretly behind them over against a certain mulberry plantation. He was to remain quiet till he heard "the sound of a going upon the tops of the mulberry trees"—a sound probably like the rush of a mighty host to battle—which was to be a signal to him that the Divine power was moving forth to destroy and defeat his enemies; and then he was to march out against them. The king followed these directions implicitly, and the enemy hearing, it would seem, the sound of a mighty army in their rear, which they might easily imagine to be even more numerous and formidable than that led by David, and which appeared at the very moment these sounds were heard, fell into panic and confusion and were easily put to the rout. The victors pursued them hard for many long miles, even to the frontier of their own territory. *Kit.*

Let David's inquiry of God, once and again, upon occasion of the Philistines' invading him, direct us in all our ways to acknowledge him, in distress to fly to him, when we are wronged, to appeal to him, and when we know not what to do, to ask counsel at his oracles, to put ourselves under his conduct, and to beg of him to show us the right way. And let the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees direct us to attend God's motions, both in his providence and in the influence of his Spirit. When we perceive God to go before, let us gird up our loins, gird on our armor, and follow him. H.

Being thus repulsed, and then reduced to a tributary condition, the Philistines appear to have done little mischief during the remainder of David's reign or during that of Solomon his successor. In the after-portion of the period of the kings, they sometimes encroached on Judea and sometimes in turn yielded the advantage, until, by-and-by, they became involved in the wars of the great empires of Assyria and Egypt, being on the highway of communication between those countries. Just when the Philistines lost their identity as a people is not known; perhaps not before the Mohammedan invasion in the seventh century. Their country has outlived them, and on the field of their

goings for two thousand years other races have come. N. C. B.

David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son.

2 S. 9 : 1-5.

The wars of David occupy but a small space in the history of his reign. An act of kindness toward the son of his early friend, Jonathan, is told at greater length than the battles and triumphs of these numerous wars. Of his own accord, and in remembrance of his vows of friendship, he caused inquiries to be made for any of the house of Saul to whom he could show kindness. *Sime.*—When Ishbosheth was slain, and all Israel went over to David, Mephibosheth was about twelve years old, and there were obvious reasons why the friends who had taken charge of him should desire his existence to be forgotten. Thus Mephibosheth lived a quiet and peaceful life among his friends at Lo-debar; and when he grew to manhood, he married and had a son. When David was well established on his throne, he inquired one day of those about him, "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" One Ziba, a servant of Saul, now a prosperous man with fifteen sons and twenty servants, it was supposed could acquaint the king with that which he desired to know. This man was sent for. The king asked: "Is there yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" Ziba then told him of Mephibosheth, and where he was to be found; on which the king forthwith sent messengers to bring him to Jerusalem. *Kit.*—The kindness he promised to show, he calls the *kindness of God*; kindness in pursuance of the covenant that was between him and Jonathan, to which God was a witness. Jonathan's request to David was, "*Show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not, and the same to my seed.*" The kindness of God is kindness done with an eye to God and his honor and favor.

9, 10. He gives him *all the land of Saul his father*,—that is, his paternal estate, which was forfeited by Ishbosheth's rebellion, and added to his own revenue. Though he had thus given him a good estate, sufficient to maintain him, yet, for Jonathan's sake, he will take him to be a constant guest at his own table, where he will not only be comfortably fed, but have company and attendance suitable to his birth and quality. H.—The estate now made over to Mephibosheth was assigned for cultivation to Ziba, who, with his sons and servants, was to devote himself to it, and was to retain one half

the produce in recompense for his expense and labor, paying the other moiety as rent to the owner of the land. Mephibosheth was thus enabled to keep up a becoming establishment for his family in Jerusalem, while habitually taking his principal meals at the royal table, and associating with the king's sons, some of whom were nearly of his own age. As men do not sit down at table with their wives and children in the East, this constant dining at court was a distinction unaccompanied by any of the drawbacks it would bring to us. *Kit.*

Section 261.

THE ARK REMOVED FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM. UZZAH SMITTEN, AND IT REMAINS THREE MONTHS WITH OBED-EDOM. TAKEN TO ITS TENT IN JERUSALEM. DAVID'S PSALM FOR THE FIRST APPOINTED SONG-SERVICE.

2 SAMUEL 6 : 1-23. 1 CHRONICLES 13 : 1-14 ; 15 : 1-29 ; 16 : 1-43.

1 Chron. 15 : 1 AND *David* made him houses in the city of David ; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

13 1 And David consulted with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader. And David said unto all the assembly of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and if it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad everywhere unto our brethren that are left in all the land of Israel, with whom the priests and Levites are in their cities that have suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us : and let us bring again the ark of our God to us : for we sought not unto it in the days of Saul. And all the assembly said that they would do so : for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David assembled all Israel together, from Shihor *the brook* of Egypt even unto the entering in of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, *that is*, to Kiriath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, the LORD that sitteth upon the cherubim, which is called by the Name.

2 S. 6 : 2, 3 Even the name of the LORD of hosts that sitteth upon the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in the hill : and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in the hill, with the ark of God : and Ahio went before the ark. And when they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it ; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah ; and God smote him there for his error ; because he put forth his hand to the ark : and there he died before God.

1 Chron. 13 : 11 And David was displeased, because the LORD had broken forth upon Uzzah : and he called that place Perez-uzzah, unto this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me ? So David removed not the ark unto him into the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months : and the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

2 S. 6 : 12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.

1 Chron. 15 : 3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto its place, which he had prepared for it. And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Aminadab, and said unto them, Ye are the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites : sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, unto *the place* that I have prepared for it. For because ye *bare it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the

16 staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD. And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren the singers, with instruments of music, 19 psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding aloud and lifting up the voice with joy. So the Levites appointed the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, with cymbals of brass to sound 20 aloud ; and Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and 21 Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries set to Alamoth ; and Mattithiah, and Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps set to the Sheminith, to lead. 22 And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was over the song : he instructed about the song, be- 23, 24 cause he was skilful. And Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Joshaphat, and Nethanel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God : and Obed-edom and 25 Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of 26 Obed-edom with joy : and it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of 27 the covenant of the LORD, that they sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams. And David danced before the LORD with all his might ; and David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song *with* 28 the singers : and David had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus David and all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound, of the cornet, and 29 with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps. And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David dancing and playing ; and she despised

16 him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it : and they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before God. 2 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings, he 3 blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a portion *of flesh*, and a cake of raisins.

1 Chron. 16 : 43 And all the people departed every man to his house : and David returned to bless his household.

2 S. 6 : 20-23. *Michal's reproach and David's reply.* *

1 Chron. 16 : 4 And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD, the God of Israel.

7 Then on that day did David first ordain to give thanks unto the LORD, by the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

8 O give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name ;
Make known his doings among the peoples.

9 Sing unto him, sing praises unto him ;
Talk ye of all his marvellous works.

10 Glory ye in his holy name :
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

11 Seek ye the LORD and his strength ;
Seek his face evermore.

12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done ;
His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth ;

13 O ye seed of Israel his servant,
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

14 He is the LORD our God :
His judgments are in all the earth.

15 Remember his covenant forever,
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations ;

16 *The covenant* which he made with Abraham,
And his oath unto Isaac ;

17 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
To Israel for an everlasting covenant :

18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
The lot of your inheritance :

19 When ye were but a few men in number ;

- Yea, very few, and sojourners in it ;
 20 And they went about from nation to nation,
 And from one kingdom to another people.
 21 He suffered no man to do them wrong ;
 Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes ;
 22 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed ones,
 And do my prophets no harm.
 23 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth ;
 Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
 24 Declare his glory among the nations,
 His marvellous works among all the peoples.
 25 For great is the LORD, and highly to be praised :
 He also is to be feared above all gods.
 26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols :
 But the LORD made the heavens.
 27 Honor and majesty are before him :
 Strength and gladness are in his place.
 28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the peoples,
 Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
 29 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name :
 Bring an offering, and come before him :
 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
 30 Tremble before him, all the earth :
 The world also is stablished that it cannot be moved.
 31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice ;
 And let them say among the nations, the LORD reigneth.
 32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof ;
 Let the field exult, and all that is therein ;
 33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy before the LORD,
 For he cometh to judge the earth.
 34 O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good :
 For his mercy *endureth* forever.
 35 And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation,
 And gather us together and deliver us from the nations,
 To give thanks unto thy holy name,
 And to triumph in thy praise.
 36 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
 From everlasting even to everlasting.
 And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.
Omitted verses mainly repetitions.

David had recognized the superior kingship of Jehovah, and loyally acknowledged his elevation over Israel as God's sole act. More than this, he had openly admitted that the new kingdom, and *he, its king*, were for the *people's* sake, and not his own. And this sublime and just conception of God's relation which had actuated him in assuming the government, and in all his civil and military arrangements, at the same time led him now to engage in the work of reforming religion among the tribes. In this greatest work of all, the first essential was the restoration to a fitting place of the Ark of the Covenant, the golden shining symbol of God's presence and supreme sway over king and people. This sacred coffer, with mercy-seat and

cherubim of gold above, with the tables of the Law and other lesser memorials within, which had been for centuries the central point and object of Israel's representative worship, had now been neglected for seventy years. The Philistines took it upon the defeat of Israel, but were glad to escape the visitations of God by its speedy surrender. And in comparative neglect it had long remained in the house of Aminidab at Kirjath-jearim, or Baale of Judah, ten or twelve miles northwest of Jerusalem. B.—No greater event signalized the reign of David than the removal of the Ark of the Covenant from the place of its exile in Kirjath-jearim to what was henceforth to become not only the "royal" but the "holy" city. *W. Lee.*

1 Chron. 15 : 1. A tent is specially prepared by David for the reception of the Ark. Though no particulars are given, we know, from the number of servitors in the worship, and the character of the service and offerings, especially the sacrifices, that this Tabernacle must have been the centre of various and extensive temporary structures, like those of the Temple which succeeded. B.—The tabernacle which Moses had made was in Gibeah, and there, since the murder of the priests at Nob, Zadok officiated, while Abiathar acted as high-priest with David. Neither of these two could be deposed ; and so there must be two tabernacles, till God Himself should set right what the sin of men had made wrong. And for this, as we believe, David looked forward to the building of a house for the God of Israel. A. E.

1 Chron. 13 : 1-6. *In befitting state David goes to bring again the Ark of God.* His object in convoking so immense a representation of Israel's chosen men was twofold. He would thus signally honor the symbol of the Divine Majesty. And he would reinculcate upon the long forgetful and careless people the solemnity and need of their appointed religious observances ; he would reimpress the fact, so manifest to himself, that regard to religious duty alone gave value to other reforms, vitality and permanence to all national institutions. B.—The Ark had been in the house of Abinadab for seventy or eighty years—twenty during the Philistine oppression, forty or fifty under Samuel and Saul, and perhaps ten of David's reign. A. F. K.

2 S. 6 : 3-7. *The Ark brought on its new carriage part of the journey.* The first error, which led to all the rest, was an inconsiderate haste, which hindered their noting the simple ordinance respecting the bearing of the ark. They simply followed the *last* custom, though seventy years before, of the Philistines, in transporting it upon a new carriage. They had forgotten that the Levites were bidden to bear it on their shoulders, and not to touch it, lest they should die. So it was set in a new carriage, and the oxen were driven by the sons of Abinadab, in whose home, perhaps, the ark had become too familiar a thing for the reverence which was its due. We are then in some measure prepared for the sad close of David's first undertaking with the ark. In a seeming peril, Uzzah, one of these sons, laid hold upon the ark to keep it firm. And for this error God visited instant death upon him, in the very act. This visitation of God, with all the sorer ones, of family and national destructions for great transgres-

sions, can readily be reconciled with a wise and right judgment of God. It needs mainly that we understand the very low mental and moral culture attained by the Israelites in those ages ; and that we study the long process of training which God was constrained to employ in connection with stringent ordinances and ceremonials. At this juncture they had fallen back, had lost the reverence due to God in losing all sense of his presence in symbol and ordinance. Uzzah simply showed this, as an example of the many who had forgotten Jehovah, in neglecting and holding irreverently the Ark of His presence. And now that God comes with this chief symbol of a restored religion, He must prove his presence, and must waken awe fresh in their minds, by visiting the death he had before, by Moses, specifically threatened against him that should touch the sacred symbol. Uzzah died, but God used that death to invest Himself and the institutions of His worship with a vastly higher sacredness in the estimate of all the tribes of Israel. B.

7. God smote him there for his error. As before at Bethshemesh an act of irreverence toward the Ark was punished with death. The Ark was the symbol of His presence, and the Levitical ordinances were designed to secure the strictest reverence for it. It was to be carried by the Levites, but they might not come near until it had been covered by the priests, nor touch it except by the staves provided for the purpose, upon pain of death. The occasion was an important one. It was the first step in the inauguration of a new era of worship, in the newly-established capital of the kingdom ; and if these breaches of the Divine ordinances had been left unpunished, the lessons they were intended to teach might have been neglected. Uzzah's death was necessary for a solemn warning to David and the people. A. F. K.

1 Chron. 13 : 11-14. *Afraid and displeased, David leaves the Ark for three months in the house of Obed-Edom.* Very mercifully God had dealt with David's fault, and that of the Levites, in the matter of their common inconsideration. But David does not at once see it. Like a believer of ordinary grade, even with all his superior instruction by the Spirit, he indulged in hard feelings against God for what had been done to the heedless Uzzah. God suffers him to deposit the ark by the way, and to return home for reflection awhile. Then He sends His blessing upon the whole family of the man who had gladly received and reverently watched over the ark. Afterward He brings

the fact of this blessing to the knowledge of David. B.

This event hath helped Obed-Edom to a guest he looked not for. God shall now sojourn in the house of him, in whose heart he dwelt before by a strong faith : else the man durst not have undertaken to receive that dreadful ark, which David himself feared to harbor. Oh, the courage of an honest and faithful heart ! Obed-Edom knew well enough what slaughter the ark had made among the Philistines, and after that among the Bethshemites, and now he saw Uzzah lie dead before him ; yet doth he not make any scruple of entertaining it. But he opens his doors with a bold cheerfulness, and notwithstanding all those terrors, bids God welcome. The God of heaven will not receive anything from men, on free cost. He will pay liberally for his lodging ; a plentiful blessing upon Obed-Edom and all his household. It was an honor to that zealous Gittite, that the ark should come under his roof ; yet God rewards that honor with benediction : never man was loser by true godliness.

2 S. 6 : 12. Now, David and Israel were not more affrighted with the vengeance upon Uzzah, than encouraged by the blessing of Obed-Edom. The wise God doth so order his just and merciful proceedings, that the awfulness of men may be tempered by love. *Bp. H.*

1 Chron. 15 : 3-29 ; 16 : 1, 2. *David at length brings the Ark of God into Jerusalem.* With reflection his wrong fears and thoughts of God all gone, his frank admission that all his own doing had been wrong before, led him now to repair the previous error. "None ought," he said, "to carry the ark of God but the Levites, for them hath the Lord chosen." So, with a retinue of nearly a thousand priests, and "gathering all Israel," "he went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David with gladness." With every solemn ceremonial, with every token of reverence and joy, with all instruments of melody, with multitudinous song and shouting, led by David, who laid aside his royal majesty and dress in the Divine presence, the mighty throng, with one heart and voice, rendered praise and honor to Jehovah, their nation's God. "So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent David had pitched for it ; and they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before God." B.

15 : 26. God helped the Levites that carried it. The ark was no very great burden, that they who carried it needed any extraordinary help. But the Levites, remembering the breach upon

Uzzah, were ready to tremble when they took up the ark ; but God helped them—that is, he encouraged them to it, silenced their fears, and strengthened their faith. God helped them to do it decently and well, and without making any mistake. God's ministers that bear the vessels of the Lord have special need of Divine help in their ministrations, that God in them may be glorified and his church edified. And if God help the Levites, the people have the benefit of it. H.

27. A linen ephod. David laid aside his royal robes and appeared in the distinctive dress of a priest. As the head and representative of "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19 : 6), the king possessed a priestly character ; and David on this occasion exercised priestly functions in directing the sacrifices, even if he did not offer them himself (verses 17, 18), and in blessing the people. A. F. K.

1 Chron. 16 : 1, 2. The ark was placed in a tent which David had prepared to receive it, and burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were then largely offered, for the first time in Jerusalem. When these religious solemnities were performed, the king "blessed the people in the name of the Lord." *Kit.*—Jehovah thus returns once more to Israel, and takes up his abode in the midst of his people. The return of the Ark is not merely the bringing forth into notice of a long-neglected and sacred vessel belonging to the sanctuary ; it is the coming back of God himself to a people whom he had temporarily forsaken. W. H. G.—Jerusalem thus became the sanctuary as well as the capital of the kingdom. This union of the political and religious centres inaugurated a new epoch in the nation's history. It was a visible realization of the true principle of the Theocratic Monarchy. The day on which he welcomed the Ark into Zion, his own city, as a very Advent of Jehovah to dwell in the midst of His people, was the greatest day of David's life. From that day dates the beginning of the sanctity of "the Holy City," round which so many sacred associations cluster, and which has become the earthly type of heaven. A. F. K.

2 S. 6 : 20-23. *Michal's reproach and David's reply.* Michal is intentionally designated the daughter of Saul here, instead of the wife of David, because on this occasion she manifested her father's disposition rather than her husband's. The proud daughter of Saul was offended at the fact that the king had set himself down to the level of the people. She availed herself of the shortness of the priest's shoulder-dress to make a contemptuous remark concern-

ing David's dancing, as an impropriety that was unbecoming in a king. *Keil and Delitzsch.*

21. Before the Lord, who chose me rather than thy father, yea I will play before the Lord. "Before the Lord" stands emphatically at the beginning of

David's answer. No service offered to the God to whom he owed all his advancement could be degrading. Thus he defends his own conduct, and at the same time he humbles Michal's pride by alluding to Saul's rejection. A. F. K.—

22. "*I will be base in mine own sight, and will think nothing too mean to stoop to for the honor of God.*" In the throne of judgment, and in the field of battle, none shall do more to support the grandeur and authority of a prince than David shall; but in acts of devotion he lays aside the thoughts of majesty, humbles himself to the dust before the Lord, joins in with the meanest services done in honor of the ark, and yet thinks it no diminution to him. H.

23. David came to bless his house; Michal brings a curse upon herself. Her scorns shall make her childless to the day of her death. Barrenness was held in those times none of the least judgments. God doth so revenge David's quarrel upon Michal, that she shall not be held worthy to bear a son to him whom she unjustly contemned. *Bp. H.*

1 Chron. 16 : 4. After the tabernacle and ark were established on Zion, he began that grand order of musical service which he enriched from time to time with his psalms, until it was ready for Solomon's grander introduction into his temple. *Knox.*—It was the happiness of David, not only as a warrior to draw warriors round him, and as an able ruler to attract statesmen, but also, as a born musician and poet to surround himself with musicians and poets, who assisted in the production of the psalter and composed suitable melodies for the lyrics in which the king delighted. Suddenly there came upon Jerusalem the golden age of Hebrew music and song. The songs are, happily, preserved for the admiration and use of the Christian Church. It is of great importance to note well the period at which sacred song established its place in Divine worship. By the law, came neither psalm nor sacred music. Praise is united with the spirit of prophecy. Moses sang, as a prophet, over the redemption and exodus from Egypt, and sang again before his death, or better exodus to rest with God. Deborah, the prophetess, sang of victory. A company of prophets, in the days of Samuel, prophesied, as the Spirit of God moved them, "with

a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp." So David prophesied, and Asaph and Heman "prophesied and sang." It was a time of the operation of the Spirit of God, in which sweet song obtained a leading place in the religious service. It was the time of the kingdom, too, a decided advance on that of Moses and the Law. The throne of David was established in grace, and secured by a covenant of promise. Then, and not till then, was heard the voice of praise in the courts of the house of the Lord. Why is it that the Christian Church has had, from the beginning, impulse and capacity for sacred song? It is because the Spirit of God has been poured out, and because Christ reigns in grace, and "sings praise in the midst of the Church." It is meet that there should be a continual offering of the sacrifice of praise from every Christian assembly. D. F.

7-36. We have here the thanksgiving psalm which David, by the Spirit, composed, and delivered to the chief musician, to be sung upon occasion of the public entry the ark made into the tent prepared for it. H.—It is so closely and beautifully connected in its various parts, as to give the impression of one whole, parts of which may afterward have been inserted in different Psalms, just as similar adaptations are found in other parts of the Psalter (compare, for example, Ps. 40 : 17, etc., with Ps. 70). Whatever may be thought of its original form, this "Psalm" of eight stanzas, as given in the Book of Chronicles, is one of the grandest hymns in Holy Scripture. From first to last the hymn breathes a missionary spirit, far beyond any narrow and merely national aspirations.

The placing of the Ark in the capital of Israel, thus making it "the city of God," was an event not only of deep national but of such typical importance, that it is frequently referred to in the sacred songs of the sanctuary. A. E.—There are many Psalms to be referred to the removal of the ark to Jerusalem, both on the ground of tradition and of their own internal evidence. At the head of these is the 132d, in which David in his own name describes the removal of the ark from the first desire of his heart to its final accomplishment, records God's eternal covenant with him and his house, and celebrates Jehovah's choice of Zion for his abode. The 68th is equally suitable for the first removal of the ark; it begins with the words appointed by Moses to be sung when the ark was lifted, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," and it advances from the record of victory after victory to the final establishment of God's house at Jerusalem, and the prediction of the worship He

should receive from all nations of the earth. The 24th marks the entrance of the ark into the citadel of Zion by its grand refrain, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in :'' words which clearly set forth the idea which runs through all these psalms, of victory as well as praise. They celebrate not only the inauguration of the place of religious worship, but the installation of Jehovah, the glorious King, in the citadel from which he shall still go forth to conquer all the world. The 96th, 105th, 106th, are probably the full form, adapted to the Temple service, of the Psalm which David delivered to Asaph and his brethren at the close of this great ceremony. P. S.

Truths suggested by the incidents under review.

(1) The disuse of God's Word and the neglect of His worship always go together. Each leads to the other, and both lead, through heedlessness, to irreverence and disobedience. These in their turn bring results of unhappiness. (2) God's work must be done in His way, to the letter where He gives a literal command. His cause cannot be advanced, will be hindered, by any other way. Nor will He suffer men to judge of

right or wrong, when he has clearly spoken. (3) God's people sometimes misinterpret His dealings, and cherish hard thoughts concerning his doings. But even then *He* will not judge *them* harshly. He will give them time for reflection, and will help them back to right thinking and feeling by gentler and instructive Providences. (4) As individual piety brings the largest personal blessings, so household piety invariably ensures the best of household blessings. Where God's presence is always desired and welcomed, where fidelity to the covenant is regarded and faith in the Covenant-Maker is firmly cherished, and where the incense of the family altar keeps up its heavenward ascent throughout the day, like the incense flame of old, there God abides. Every such household may share a kindred blessing with that bestowed on the family of Obed-Edom. (5) Joy underlies all true worship. It was a leading characteristic of the Old Testament service ; instruments, and even dancing before the Lord, were only an allowed expression of a holy enthusiasm and gladness. So joy belongs equally to the spiritual worship of the New Testament. Its hallowed and beautiful ministry should be oftener invoked, and more heartily responded to, in all the services of private and public devotion. B.

Section 262.

DAVID'S DESIRE TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR JEHOVAH. GOD'S MESSAGE BY NATHAN. THE GREAT COVENANT PROMISE. DAVID'S GRATEFUL PRAISE AND PRAYER.

2 SAMUEL 7 : 1-29. 1 CHRONICLES 17 : 1-27.

2 S. 7 : 1 AND it came to pass, when the king dwelt in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies round about, that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart ; for the LORD is with thee. And it came to pass the same night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou (Thou shalt not, *Chron.*) build me an house for me to dwell in ? for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedar ? Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people, over Israel : and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee ; and I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more ; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the

11 first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel ; and I will
 cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover the Lord telleth thee that the Lord will
 12 make thee an house. When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will
 set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his king-
 13 dom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom
 14 forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son : if he commit iniquity, I will chasten
 15 him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men ; but my mercy shall
 16 not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house
 and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee : thy throne shall be established for-
 17 ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak
 unto David.

18 Then David the king went in, and sat before the Lord ; and he said, Who am I, O Lord
 God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far ?

1 Chron 17 : 17 And this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God ; but thou hast spoken
 of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate
 18 of a man of high degree, O Lord God. What can David say yet more unto thee concerning
 19 the honor which is done to thy servant ? for thou knowest thy servant. O Lord, for thy
 word's sake, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all
 this greatness, to make thy servant know all these great things.

2 S. 7 : 22 Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God : for there is none like thee, neither is
 23 there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one
 nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem unto him-
 self for a people, and to make him a name, and to do great things for you, and terrible things
 for thy land, in driving out nations from before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee out
 24 of Egypt, from the nations and their gods ? And thou didst establish to thyself thy people
 25 Israel to be a people unto thee forever ; and thou, Lord, becamest their God. And now, O
 Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house,
 26 confirm thou it forever, and do as thou hast spoken. And let thy name be established and
 magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is God over Israel : and the house of thy servant
 27 David shall be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, hast
 revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house : therefore hath thy servant found
 28 in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art God, and thy
 29 words are truth, and thou hast promised this good thing unto thy servant : now therefore let
 it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue forever before thee : for
 thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it : and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be
 blessed forever.

The same desire to exalt the Lord which had distinguished David thus far now manifests itself in reference to a house for God. He dwelt in a permanent and splendid abode. God dwelt in a temporary and plain tent. The contrast impresses him painfully, and he forms the design of erecting a costly temple for God's worship. This feeling and design he communicated to the Prophet Nathan, who approved and encouraged its execution. But neither had consulted God, and both were mistaken in their confident assurance of the Divine approval. For that very night God intimated His will in the matter to Nathan. He has not desired as yet "a house of cedar," nor will he accept one at the hands of David. Elsewhere and at another time, God commends David's purpose, and assigns the reason for declining it—that David had been a man of war and of blood. Further, in the message by Nathan, David is reminded of his lowly

shepherd lot, out of which God had taken him, and advanced him to a great kingdom and name. And this, not for David's sake, as David himself had before "perceived," but to establish His people Israel as a nation ; to give them a permanent home and rest in the land He had promised before to Abraham, and now bestowed on them. B.

2 S. 7 : 1, 2. To complete the history of the religious movement of that period, the sacred writers insert in this place the account of David's purpose to build a temple. The introduction to the narrative (verse 1), and the circumstance that at the time most if not all the wars mentioned in 2 S. 8 and 10 were past, sufficiently indicate that in this, as in other instances, the history is *not* arranged according to strict chronological succession. Still it must have taken place when David's power was at its zenith. A. E.

31-11. The impulse of generous devotion, which cannot bear to lavish more upon self than it gives to God, at first commended itself to the prophet; but in the solitude of his nightly thoughts the higher Wisdom speaks in his spirit, and the Word of God gives him a message for the king. The narrative makes no mention of David's war like life as unfitting him for the task, which we find from 2 Chron. was one reason why his purpose was set aside, but brings into prominence the thought that David's generous impulse was outrunning God's commandment. So the prophetic message reminds him that the Lord had never, through all the centuries, asked for a house of cedar, and recalls the past life of David as having been wholly shaped and blessed by Him, while it pointedly inverts the king's proposal in its own grand promise, "The Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house." A. M.

Of David's purpose to build a house God took notice, and he was well pleased with it, as appears (1 K. 8 : 18), *Thou didst well that it was in thine heart*; yet he forbade him to go on with his purpose. David is a man of war, and he must enlarge the borders of Israel, by carrying on their conquests. David is a sweet psalmist, and he must prepare psalms for the use of the temple when it is built, and settle the courses of the Levites; but his son's genius will better suit for building the house, and he will have a better treasure to bear the charge of it.

11. David had purposed to build God a house, and, in requital, God promises to *build him a house*. Whatever we do for God, or sincerely design to do, though Providence prevents our doing it, we *shall in no wise lose our reward*. He had promised to make him a *name* (verse 9), here he promises to make him a *house*, which should bear up that name. These promises God faithfully performed to David, and his seed, in due time. Though David came short of making good his purpose to build God's house, yet He did not come short of making good His promise to build him a house. Such is the tenor of the covenant we are under; though there are many failures in our performances, there are none in God's. H.

12-16. *God's Covenant with David, a covenant with immediate and far-reaching promises.* In reach, meaning, and preciousness, this finds its main parallel in the Covenant with Abraham. Both are but amplifications of the brief promise to the fallen Adam. Like the promise made to Abraham, this to David has a twofold reference and meaning. It refers to David's natural posterity and his earthly kingdom, and, in this ref-

erence, is conditional upon right conduct, and is a contingent and temporary promise (1 Chron. 28 : 9). Its larger and sublimer reference is to Christ and His spiritual kingdom. Here the promise is absolute and unlimited. With this double meaning in thought, read the terms of this Divine pledge to David: *I will make thee a house. I will set up thy seed after thee, and will establish his kingdom. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. Thine house and thy throne shall be established forever.*

This promise had a literal fulfilment, in the establishment of David's dynasty, in the enthronement of Solomon, despite the machinations of his elder brethren, and in the long perpetuation of the house of David; virtually, in the desire and will of the Jewish people, until the coming of Christ. Then the temporal part of the promise was linked on to the spiritual, of which it was the designed type and pledge. Christ was the promised seed and son of David, His kingdom that which should be established forever, according to the Old Testament and New. Paul's simple utterance sums up the substance of both: "*Of this man's (David's) seed hath God, according to his promise (this very promise before us), raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.*" And as this text thus expounds and explains the promise to David in its ultimate supreme reference to Christ, so it as plainly intimates that the nation Israel stands here, not for the Hebrew race, but for the greater spiritual nation or kingdom of believers in all ages. This, too, is the cheering doctrine of the whole Old Testament and New. This "royal nation," this "people all His own," shall have an everlasting habitation and rest under the enduring dominion of Jesus. Based upon this covenant with David, from this time forth Christ's Kingship is dwelt upon by David himself, and referred to by the prophets. And because the vital meaning of the Priestly office and sacrifice had been lost, it came to pass that at the Advent and onward this Kingship was the exclusive thought of the Jewish people respecting the looked-for Messiah. B.

This promise has ultimate respect to Christ; the seed of David, and is fulfilled in him only; for the kingdom of David has long since ceased, any otherwise than it is upheld in Christ. That this covenant which God now established with David by Nathan the prophet, was the covenant of grace, is evident by the plain testimony of Scripture in Isa 55 : 1-3. There we have Christ inviting sinners to come to the waters. And in the third verse he says, "Incline your ear, come unto me; hear, and your souls shall

live ; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David." Here Christ offers to sinners, if they will come to him, to give them an interest in the same everlasting covenant that he had made with David, conveying to them the same sure mercies. But what is that covenant but the covenant of grace? This was the fifth solemn establishment of that covenant. The first was with Adam, the second was with Noah, the third was with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the fourth was in the wilderness by Moses, and now the fifth is this made to David. This establishment of the covenant of grace with David, David always esteemed the greatest smile of God upon him, the greatest honor of all that God had put upon him ; he prized it, and rejoiced in it above all the other blessings of his reign. You may see how joyfully and thankfully he received it here. And so, in his last words, he declares this to be all his salvation, and all his desire (2 S. 23 : 5). *Edwards.*

From the very exalted emotions which the promise raised in his breast, and the enthusiasm with which he poured forth his thanksgivings for it, we infer that David saw in it far more than a promise that for generations to come his house would enjoy a royal dignity. He must have concluded that the great hope of Israel was to be fulfilled in connection with his race. God's words implied that it was in His line the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled—"In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." He saw Christ's day afar off and was glad. W. G. B.

15. Under no circumstances would God withdraw his favor from David's royal house, or annul his gift of the kingdom, as he had done in the case of Saul. Hence, when the ten tribes revolted and set up a separate kingdom, in memory of this promise, Judah was preserved faithful to the house of David ; and in the confidence that the kingdom should be given to the great Son of David in the future, the prophets speak of "the sure mercies of David."

16. The perpetuity of David's house and kingdom is further emphasized by a double "forever." The promise here made to David forms the basis of most of the Messianic hopes and prophecies from this time forward. It is dwelt upon by David in his last words (2 S. 23 : 5), and in his charge to Solomon (1 K. 2 : 4) ; it is more or less prominently the theme of several of the psalms (*e.g.*, Ps. 89 : 19-37 ; 132 : 11, 12), and of the predictions of the prophets (Isa. 9 : 6, 7 ; 11 : 1, etc. ; Jer. 33 : 20, 21). W. H. G.

THE MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THIS GREAT PROMISE TO DAVID.

This prophecy marks an important stage in the Old Testament revelation which prepared the way for the Messiah's coming. The primeval promise to Adam held out the hope of deliverance through "the seed of the woman ;" Abraham received the assurance that "in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed ;" Jacob in his dying blessing assigned the sceptre to Judah. Thus the whole human race, one nation of the race, and one tribe of the nation, were successively designated to be the means of realizing the promise of blessing to mankind. And now by this prophetic declaration a further limitation was made, and the family of David was chosen out of the tribe of Judah as the depositary of the promise. At this epoch of the national history, Israel's hopes centred in the theocratic kingdom, in the establishment of a government whose head was to be the visible representative of Jehovah. And now by God's message through Nathan this kingdom was forever promised to the house of David. To it therefore men's hopes were now directed as the destined instrument of salvation. But this prophecy does not speak of the Messiah as an individual ; it does not predict the perfect reign of a sinless king. It contemplates a succession of kings of David's line, who would be liable to fall into sin and would need the discipline of chastisement. The perfect king in whom, as we now know, the line was to culminate, and the prophecy receive its highest fulfilment, is not yet foreshadowed. It remained for prophet and psalmist, developing this fundamental revelation, to draw the picture of the ideal king who should spring from David's seed, and exercise dominion as the true representative of Jehovah on earth. As each human heir of David's line failed to fulfil the expectation, hope was carried forward and elevated, until He came to whom is given the throne of His father David, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. The subsequent references to this great promise should be carefully studied : David applies it to Solomon (1 Chron. 22 : 9, 10 ; 28 : 2). Solomon claims it for himself (1 K. 5 : 5 ; 2 Chron. 6 : 7 ff. ; 1 K. 8 : 17-20). It is confirmed to Solomon (1 K. 9 : 4, 5). It is repeatedly affirmed, that in spite of the sin of individual kings, the kingdom shall not be withdrawn from David's house for his sake (1 K. 11 : 31-39 ; 15 : 4, 5 ; 2 K. 8 : 18, 19). Ps. 89, written no doubt in the dark days when the monarchy was already tottering to its fall, recapitulates this promise, and pleads with God that He should not suffer it to

be frustrated. See especially verses 19-37. A. F. K.

This prophecy is a covenant-promise which, extending along the whole line, culminates in the Son of David, and in all its fulness applies only to Him. These three things did God join in it, of which one necessarily implies the other, alike in the promise and in the fulfilment: a unique relationship, a unique kingdom, and a unique fellowship and service resulting from both. The unique relationship was that of Father and Son, which in all its fulness only came true in Christ (Heb. 1 : 5). The unique kingdom was that of the Christ, which would have no end (Luke 1 : 32, 33 ; John 3 : 35). And the unique sequence of it was that brought about through the temple of His body (John 2 : 19), which will appear in its full proportions when the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (Rev. 21 : 1-3).

Such was the glorious hope opening up wider and wider, till at its termination David could see "afar off" the dawn of the bright morning of eternal glory; such was the destiny and the mission which, in His infinite goodness, God assigned to His chosen servant. Many were his failings and sins, and those of his successors; and heavy rods and sore stripes were to fall upon them. But that promise never failed. Apprehended from the first by the faith of God's people, it formed the grand subject of their praise, and continued the hope of the Church, as expressed in the burning language and ardent aspirations of psalmists and prophets. Brighter and brighter this light grew, even unto the perfect day; and when all else seemed to fail, these were still "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55 : 3), steadfast and stable, at last fully realized in the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A. E.

This is a germinal or seed prophecy—a standard prediction which leads the thought of numerous subsequent prophecies, and which furnishes largely the current phraseology—the symbols and terms in which later prophecies of the Messiah were clothed. The Messiah was subsequently presented very generally as a *King*—a king after the type of David, with a kingdom analogous to his; as a successor to David, on his throne; and as bearing in prophecy the name, David. The latter point is the more conclusive because he was never known by this name during his incarnation. It appears in prophecy only, and, therefore, has the more unquestionable allusion to this great germinal prophecy. The Messianic Psalms, especially those written by David himself, must be high authority on

this point, since they reveal his own conceptions of the promised Messiah. Remarkably these Psalms do everywhere represent the Messiah as *King*.

The Messiah, as seen by Isaiah, is in several visions a King on the throne of David (9 : 6, 7, etc.) In Isa. 55 : 3 the phrase "the sure mercies of David," looks toward this very passage (2 S. 7) as embodying and embosoming in itself the fullness of Messianic promise—the great idea of Divine mercy to a lost world. It can scarcely be necessary to follow this argument through the Messianic prophecies of the other prophets. But we ought not to overlook the sublime strains of those latest prophets who, standing in the presence of the infant Jesus, foresaw his future triumphs and gave their interpretation of these earliest promises made to David. The angel Gabriel brought down these words prophetic of Jesus: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1 : 32). So Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for having raised up an horn of Salvation (a powerful Saviour) for us in the house of his servant David, under whom we shall be saved from our enemies,"—he being a real *king* over his people. Further, note the testimony of Peter, given under the special inspiration of the great day of Pentecost (Acts 2 : 30): "David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," etc. There seems to be no room to doubt that Peter refers to this passage in 2 S. 7, for there is no other promise of God to David on record to which he can refer. Peter inferred (very justly) that the promise of an *eternal* throne to one who was a descendant of David must assume and imply his *resurrection*, and an immortal life beyond. Let us close with the testimony of Paul, from whose sermon at Antioch (Acts 13 : 22, 23) we may read—"I have found David the Son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart; of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus"—the promise referred to being none other than this in 2 S. 7. H. C.

Now we can understand why David was overcome with ecstasy of emotion; why he thought that all which Jehovah had done for him in raising him to a throne was a small thing compared with this new covenant promise. He felt himself now exalted to the position of the Adam, in

that, like Adam and Noah and Abraham, he had been selected to stand as the great representative and typical man, and the starting-point of a new covenant, in the grand series through which the scheme of redemption was to be developed to men. And this new covenant with David becomes a new and additional development of the relations and office of the promised Deliverer to the faith of the church. Before, he has been revealed, in every age, as her Prophet, to reveal the will of God. Thus was he revealed in all the Theophanies of the Patriarchal era, in the Sinai revelations, and in the oracles of the Theocratic era. Before, he has been revealed, in every age, as her Priest. So he was revealed in all the varieties of the ritual of atonement by sacrifice. Now he is revealed also as her King, to rule his chosen people and conquer all enemies. And henceforth, while faith contemplates him none the less as Prophet and Priest, it contemplates him chiefly as coming in his Kingly office to gather out of all nations and all ages a great spiritual kingdom as the result of his prophetic and priestly work. From this time forward the chief purpose of the prophetic teachings and revelations is to develop the nature, the functions and the destiny of this peculiar typical kingdom, organized by the covenant with David, under the administration of the great Founder and King typified in David's royal line. The key-note to which the harp of prophecy is attuned henceforth is "*Thy throne, Oh God, is forever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*" The fundamental form of the Church's theology is moulded in this promise of a coming King to administer a universal kingdom. The Church gospel becomes a proclamation, as in Isaiah, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you according to the sure mercies of David." As this conception of a spiritual kingdom to come is that with which the series of Old Testament revelations closes, so it is that with which the New Testament opens. Jesus has come to sit upon the throne of his father David, is the grand announcement at the incarnation of the Son of God. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" is the first New Testament preaching. This kingdom according to the covenant with David, as the kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God, was the grand subject of the preaching of Jesus during his personal ministry. The great truth first proclaimed by the Apostles after his ascension and the outpouring of the spirit was, "Him hath God exalted to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*." The last vision of him by mortal eye is as the "Lamb in the midst of the throne." The last

gospel that closes up revelation, comes from Jesus as "the root and the offspring of David." Thus, in the entire Scriptures Jesus Christ is exhibited as the Prophet who reveals all and the Priest who redeems all, in order that He may be the King that rules all. S. R.

18-21. *David gratefully acknowledges God's unmerited favors.* Profoundly moved by the message of Nathan, he goes to the tabernacle, and there continues for a time before the Lord. Accepting without a word the disappointment of his desire to build a House for the Lord, rejoicing, as we learn, that it would be erected by his son, and content with the humble part of garnering material for the sacred structure, David now simply responds almost in terms to the words of Jehovah. "Thou didst take me," he says, "from the sheep-cote, thou didst choose me from a lowly household. And it was a small thing for thee to do, to elevate me to the highest honor. Now thou hast added to all this the promise to perpetuate my name and house! How can I express my obligations?" Then gratefully he traces "all these great things" to previous promises, and to God's own love and grace alone. "Not from any desert of mine, but of *thine own heart* hast thou been moved in doing all." Next he passes from this gracious dealing with himself to the higher election of the Jewish nation.

22-24. *David recognizes God's sovereign love in his choice and confirmation alike of the earthly and the spiritual Israel.* "Nations, like individuals, are subjects of thy sovereign dealing. And Israel thou hast 'redeemed to thee' from among the nations. In all the way thou hast led this people, in all the great and terrible things thou hast done for their protection and deliverance, thou hast shown thy sovereign power and thine electing love." Then, recurring to the enlarged promises in behalf of His people, just uttered at the mouth of Nathan, David recognizes in the words God's own eternal confirmation of His long-covenanted blessings, His pledge that the *spiritual* Israel shall be *His people*, and that *He will be their God forever*. To these words in this sublime interpretation, Isaiah refers in that wonderful Gospel invitation, his fifty-fifth chapter, where he declares in God's name "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." So Zacharias in his song, Peter and Paul in their discourses make similar reference to these words of David in this their larger application to God's spiritual Israel. Nay, more than this, as already intimated, David himself afterward, in his Messianic Psalms, the Evangelical Prophet, and the Apostles, centre all

the blessings of this everlasting covenant in the person and work of Christ the Son of David, the only King eternal. Here then, let it be noted again, in this higher significance of God's covenant with David, we find the central truth which links all truths of the entire Revelation of God. And here we learn that David's kingship and David's kingdom are distinguished from others only as they represent the Almighty Kingship and the everlasting Kingdom of the Lord Jehovah, Jesus. B.

26. David prays for the glorifying of God's name; *Let thy name be magnified forever*; this ought to be the summary and centre of all our prayers, the Alpha and the Omega of them; begin with *Hallowed be thy name*, and end with *Thine is the glory forever*.

29. *Let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, and again, with thy blessing; let the house of thy servant be truly and eternally blessed. Those whom thou blessest are blessed indeed.* The care of good men is very much concerning their families; and the best entail on their families is that of the blessing of God. The repetition of this request is not a vain repetition, but expressive of the value he had of the Divine blessing, and his earnest desire of it, as all in all to the happiness of his family. H.

25-29. In these verses we have a characteristic supplication of an Old Testament believer. David's one request is *that God will do as He has said, that He will establish and bless His servant's house forever*. This request is presented in many forms and with various urgent pleas. Yet one plea is strongest, and blends with all others. It is *God's promise*, His *voluntary promise*. He says, "Thou hast promised this goodness, and thy words be true!" "Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and thou art that God" who "for thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast done all these great things!" His simple faith affirms, "Thou canst not deny thyself, thy promised mercies are sure!" Yet while he thus believes, he well understands that true faith and desire must and will find expression in earnest prayer—that God wills that true faith and desire shall turn promises into prayers, and so insure that prayers be turned into fulfilments. Hence his many, varied, importunate requests. We take this as the first of several pointed suggestions that may be gathered out of this entire prayer of David. The soul that truly prays first considers God's promises; realizes that the good promised is that which it needs and desires; believes, from what God is and has done, that He will keep the promise and give the desired good; and, under the quickening of

desire and faith, earnestly asks and pleads for it. Whatever increase of spiritual breadth and light the New Testament brings, it adds nothing to the teachings of the Old respecting the elements and practice of prayer. The prayers of Paul are grander in their reach, sublimer in their spiritual depth, but the prayers of Abraham, Moses, and David deeply touch and teach our hearts with their simplicity of faith and fervor of expression. Most effectively do these Old Testament saints "teach us how to pray."

Another suggestion from David's prayer. *He believed and therefore prayed the Scripture doctrine of God's sovereignty*. Belief in the doctrine did not hinder, but prompted his prayer. He admitted the fact of this sovereignty exactly as God asserted it. Then he applied it to himself, to his people, and to all peoples forevermore. Nay more, he found motive and comfort in it, motive to pray, and comfort in praying. And this kind of prayer, this reference to God's sovereign greatness and grace, and these repeated, intense pleas based on His sovereignty, were accepted of God. So to-day, with us. The same faith in God's gracious control over life's daily events, admitted and cherished, will prompt and help, not hinder prayer; will strengthen motive and increase comfort in praying. And now, as ever, God delights in and will respond to every plea resting upon His sovereign gracious willing and doing.

Specially instructive, also, in this same connection, are two expressions of this prayer when set together. Because "*according to thine own heart thou hast done*," "*thy servant hath found in his heart to pray*." Here God's heart and man's are referred to as the ultimate spring of action. And here the acting of God's heart is counted as the moving influence in the acting of man's heart. David believed that the heart of God actuated His doing, that love impelled and executed His plans, therefore his own heart was moved to love, to gratitude and devotion.

Here is the Divine love waking the human. Here is the Divine Plan exhibited as actuated and formed under the instigation of Divine Love. Here, in a word, is the Old Testament way of rendering that incomparable utterance of Christ, "God so loved the world," etc. And as God's heart moves His will and hand in all his deeds toward men, so it is in man's heart He seeks response, in man's love He supremely delights.

A final point is, that the heart quickened to pray as David's was, may well imitate the simplicity and directness of his pleading. Such pleading is not common—is scarce counted reverent by

some. But if the heart be in it, if an object desired be promised, if there be faith with desire, then, however simple, plain, or defective the form of expression, God will see in it no disrespect, but the attempt to do honor to Him. No matter how large the blessing sought, if it come within the reach of promise, and if faith turn the promise into prayer, then God will turn the prayer into praise by its fulfilment. B.

THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DAVID'S REIGN AND LIFE.

1. The whole of the Jewish dispensation was designed by God to be a preparation for the coming of Christ. Many of its institutions, ordinances, events, and characters were *typical*--that is to say, they were intended to be as it were *outlines* drawn beforehand to prefigure and foreshadow Christ, and to prepare men's minds to expect His coming.

2. The Kingdom of God in Israel was typical of the Kingdom of God afterward to be established in the world; and the King of Israel was typical of Christ, the King of that universal kingdom. The characteristics of his office, as interpreted by a succession of prophets, led men to look for One who should perfectly realize the ideal, which had been imperfectly realized by the best of their human kings.

3. The Theocratic King was typical of Christ in the following respects: (1) His distinctive title was "the Lord's Anointed:" and under this very title men were led to look for the coming Deliverer as the Messiah or the Christ. (2) He was the visible representative of Jehovah, who was Himself the true King of Israel; the instrument of the Divine government, through whom He dispensed deliverance, help, and blessing. He would therefore be a conquering king, before whom no enemies could stand, if he was true to his calling. So Christ came as the representative of God, with supreme authority in earth, delegated to Him by His Father, and destined finally to conquer all His enemies. (3) His will was therefore to be in perfect harmony with the will of God; and his kingdom would be, in proportion as it realized its purpose, a

kingdom of righteousness and peace; foreshadowing imperfectly what was never perfectly accomplished except by Christ. (4) In virtue of this intimate relation to God he received the lofty title of God's Son (2 S. 7 : 14), a title given to no other individual, signifying God's parental care over him, and the filial obedience due from him to God. This title is a most striking anticipation of the mysterious relationship of Christ to God.

4. In these respects any king of Israel, who at all fulfilled his office, was to some extent a type of Christ; and David, because he was the truest example of a king after God's own heart, was the most prominent and striking type of Christ among them. And David, more than any other single individual, was a type, an anticipatory likeness, of Christ the Perfect Man. In the fervency of his aspirations, in the closeness of his communion with God, in the firmness of his trust, in the strength of his love, he was unrivalled by any human character of the Old Testament. No man ever "touched humanity at so many points;" and the many-sidedness of his character, and the variety of his experience, which qualified him for practical sympathy with all ranks and all conditions of life among his subjects, made him again a type of Him whom "it behoved in all things to be made like unto his brethren." He was an eminent example of the spiritual capability of the human soul as a recipient of Divine illumination, preparing the way for the highest Example of all. (7) In these respects, both as king and as man, David was an undoubted type of Christ. Many other striking correspondences between him and the antitype whom he prefigured may be noted; for example, his occupation as shepherd, first of his flock, and then of Israel: his persecution by enemies, and elevation to reign through many sufferings and trials: the misunderstandings and scorn he met with from his own relations: his betrayal by one who had been admitted to his closest confidence, and so forth: but though these analogies are most interesting and instructive, it may be questioned whether they can, strictly speaking, be called *typical*. A. F. K.

Section 263.

DAVID'S VICTORIES OVER PHILISTIA, MOAB, TWO SYRIAN KINGDOMS, AND EDM. GATHERED TREASURE DEDICATED TO GOD'S HOUSE. HIS WISE, JUST REIGN. CIVIL OFFICERS.

2 SAMUEL 8 : 1-18. 1 CHRONICLES 18 : 1-17.

2 S. 8 : 1 AND after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them : and David took the bridle of the mother city Gath, and her towns out of the hand of
 2 the Philistines. And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground ; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep
 3 alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, and brought presents. David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his dominion at the River
 4 Euphrates. And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen : and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an
 5 hundred chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of
 6 Zobah, David smote of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus : and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought presents. And
 7 the LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went. And David took the shields of gold
 8 that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah and
 9 from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass. And when Toi
 10 king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against
 Hadadezer and smitten him : for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him
 11 all manner of vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass : these also did king David dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all the nations
 12 which he subdued ; of Syria, of Edom, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.
 13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Edomites in the Valley of
 14 Salt, even eighteen thousand men. And he put garrisons in Edom ; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went.
 15 And David reigned over all Israel ; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his
 16 people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host ; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud
 17 was recorder : and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests ;
 18 and Seraiah was scribe ; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* the Cherethites and the Pelethites ; and David's sons were chief about the king.

By a fitting arrangement, the record of God's promise to establish the kingdom of David is followed by an account of all his wars, though here also the order is not strictly chronological. In fact, we have merely a summary of results, which is all that was necessary in a history of the kingdom of God—the only exception being in the case of the war with Ammon and their allies the Syrians, which is described in detail in 2 S. 10 and 11 because it is connected with David's great sin. A. E.

2 S. 8 : 1-15. His own throne, and the service of God's sanctuary, being thus established, David advanced to the final subjugation of the enemies of Israel. **1.** The Philistines were now, in their turn, invaded and subdued by David, who took the proud frontier city of Gath,

"The bridle of the mother-city," with its "daughter towns." Except one or two minor combats, we hear of no further trouble from the Philistines during David's reign. This conquest secured to Israel its promised boundary on the southwest, the "river of Egypt." **2.** Turning to the eastern frontier, David exacted from Moab a signal vengeance for all her enmity against Israel down from the time of Balak. Two thirds of the people were put to death, and the other third reduced to tribute. David's personal relations to this nation, whose blood he shared, had been so friendly that we have seen him committing his father and mother to the care of the King of Moab, but we may be quite sure that David's vengeance was provoked by some treacherous insult, as in the later case

of Ammon. Thus was Balaam's prophecy fulfilled :—" Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of Ar" (the metropolis of Moab). **3-6.** The eastern frontier being now secured, for Nahash the Ammonite was his friend, David advanced to the conquest of the promised boundary on the northeast, "the great river Euphrates." Two Syrian kingdoms lay between him and his purpose. That of Zobah, which has been mentioned more than once before, was then governed by Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, whom David defeated, taking from him his force of 1000 chariots, 700 horse, and 20,000 infantry. The chariot-horses were hamstrung, according to the command of Moses, but David could not resist the temptation of reserving 100 chariots as an ornament for his royal state. The Syrians of Damascus, coming to the help of Hadadezer, were defeated with the loss of 22,000 men ; and that fairest and oldest of the cities of the world was made tributary to David, and garrisoned by his troops. "Thus did Jehovah preserve David whithersoever he went." **9-12.** These victories led to an alliance with Toi, king of Hamath (the Coele-Syria of the Greeks), who sent his son Joram to congratulate David on the defeat of Hadadezer, his own enemy. This, together with the old friendship of Hiram king of Tyre, secured the northern frontier ; and David returned to Jerusalem, laden with the golden shields of Hadadezer's body guard, the brass taken from his cities (verse 8), and the vessels of gold and silver and brass which Joram had brought as presents. All these, together with the spoils of Moab and the Philistines, the plunder formerly taken from Amalek, and that gained afterward from Edom and the sons of Ammon, he dedicated for the service of the future Temple. **13, 14.** The long conflict of Edom with his brother Israel was now brought to its first decision by a great victory gained by Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, in "the valley of Salt" (on the south of the Dead Sea), in which the Edomites lost 18,000 men. David was probably in Syria at the time of this battle, which was followed up by a great army under Joab, who in six months almost exterminated the male population. David then visited the conquered land, and placed garrisons in all the cities. The young king, Hadad, however, escaped to Egypt, and became afterward a formidable enemy to Solomon. These victories, which David celebrates in the 60th and 110th Psalms, carried the southern frontier of Israel to the eastern head of the Red Sea ; and from that point to the frontier of Egypt, the Arab tribes had felt

enough of his power as an exile not to molest him in the hour of his triumph. The bounds of the promised land were now fully occupied, though not even now so completely as if Israel had been faithful from the first. For, besides the scattered remnants of the old inhabitants, several of whom (as Ittai the Gittite, Uriah the Hittite, and others) were conspicuous among the king's great men ; besides that the Philistines and others, who had been devoted to extermination, were only reduced to tribute ; there was one fair province unsubdued, the whole coast of Phœnicia, the great cities of which still flourished under their native kings, the chief of whom was David's firm ally. These extended limits were only preserved during the reigns of David and of Solomon, a period of about sixty years. For that time, however, the state formed no longer a petty monarchy barely holding its own among the surrounding nations, as under Saul ; but it was truly one of the great Oriental monarchies ; too truly, indeed, for the magnificence of Solomon sapped its strength, and prepared its speedy dissolution. Meanwhile David's position is thus described by the Prophet Nathan :—"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I took thee from the sheepecote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel : and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." **15.** Thus "David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people." P. S.

2. In the first wars the conquerors gave no quarter at all, but destroyed all their enemies without distinction of age or sex. Prisoners were also destroyed in the same manner. This was the ancient war law. We are fully persuaded that it is for the very purpose of marking his humane consideration for the Moabites, contrary to all the rules of warfare in that age, the fact is mentioned, which has been fastened upon by thoughtless persons as a proof of his harshness. There can be no doubt, we think, that every man among the Moabitish prisoners fully expected to be put to death ; and that the exemption of a large third was received as an act of unparalleled grace on the part of David. *Kit.*

6. This war is mentioned not only by Eupolemus, who appears to have been well acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, but also by Nicolas of Damascus, the friend of Augustus Cæsar, who clearly draws his history from the records of his native place. "After this," says Nicolas, "there was a certain Hadad, a native Syrian, who had

great power : he ruled over Damascus, and all Syria, except Phœnicia. He likewise undertook a war with David, the king of Judea, and contended against him in a number of battles ; in the last of them all—which was by the river Euphrates, and in which he suffered defeat—showing himself a prince of the greatest courage and prowess.” This is a testimony of the same nature with those already adduced from Berosus and Manetho ; it is a separate and independent notice of an event in Jewish history, which has come down to us from the other party in the transaction, with particulars not contained in the Jewish account, yet compatible with all that is so contained, and strictly corroborative of the main circumstances of the Hebrew narrative. G. R.

7-12. The troops of Hadadezer seem to have brought something like Assyrian magnificence from beyond the Euphrates. There were not only the chariots and horses, but some of the troops had golden shields, which of course came into the hands of David. He found also valuable spoils of brass in some of the captured cities. All this, as well as the metallic spoils of his other wars, David appropriated, not to his own enrichment, but to the object he had most at heart,—the future temple of the Lord. He was forbidden to build it himself, but there was nothing to prevent him from gathering materials for it ; and this he did to such an extent—not only by the treasure he accumulated, but by leaving a plan of the building, and by organizing the sacred ministrations—that a careful consideration of the matter may leave it doubtful, whether much more of the credit of the undertaking is not due to him than to Solomon. *Kit.* —David aimed at the glory of God. All the precious things he was master of were dedicated things ; they were designed for the building of the temple ; and a good omen it was of kindness to the Gentiles in the fulness of time, and of the making of God’s house a house of prayer for all people, that the temple was built of the spoils and presents of Gentile nations. In allusion to which, we find *the kings of the earth bringing their glory and honor into the new Jerusalem* (Rev. 21 : 24). H.

13, 14. The superscription of Psalm 60 indicates that the main army of David was still occupied in the Syrian war, when Abishai was detached to oppose the Edomites. At such a time nothing but the most urgent necessity of resisting their aggressions could have constrained the king to weaken an army engaged in the most important campaign of all his wars. The Edomites, therefore, by their aggression brought down upon their heads the ancient

doom of eventual subjection to the house of Jacob. On the approach of Abishai into the valley of Salt, at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, a most bloody battle was fought between the two armies, and the desperateness with which the Edomites contested the victory may be judged from the fact that they left eighteen thousand of their number slain upon the battle-field. From 1 K. 11 : 14-17, it appears that as soon as Joab was released from the Syrian campaign, he marched to this new scene of action, in order to settle the conquered country. He remained there six months, with the bulk of the Hebrew army. Joab’s mode of settling the country was after the Oriental fashion—of making a desolation, and calling it peace. Exasperated at the attempt of the Edomites, which might have endangered the large operations in the north, he caused the male Edomites to be hunted out and put to death, wherever they were found ; and established Hebrew garrisons in the strongholds and principal towns of Edom. Thus Edom became subject to David. *Kit.*

Since the days of Moses, Edom had never come into a collision with Israel. But in an evil hour, Edom had joined the great Ammonite confederacy. Brief as are the Scripture references, it is evident that this confederacy was one of supreme peril for the Israelite monarchy, and had been planned with consummate political skill by Hanun and Hadadezer. Humanly speaking, the battles of Helam and Betah were, as those of Bethhoron and Kadesh had been, four hundred and fifty years before, the decisive battles of the crisis of Israel’s history. David, like all successful leaders, was prompt to strike, and never too late. While Joab and the bulk of his army was detained after his victories before the fortress of Ammon, he detached Abishai to inflict speedy vengeance on Edom. At the south end of the Dead Sea he won a signal victory, which left the pass of Akrabbim open. He ascended it, took the strong city (Ps. 60 : 9)—that is, Petra, and penetrated every ravine and defile of the rugged mountains. Joab, when the eastern campaign was over, followed up his brother’s success, gave no quarter to the male population, and completely subdued and garrisoned the whole country. Thus the frontiers of Egypt and Israel became conterminous. H. B. T.

15. God gives men power, not that they may look great with it, but that they may do good with it. When David reigned over all Israel, he *executed judgment and justice among all his people*, and so answered the end of his elevation. He was not so intent on his conquests abroad as

to neglect the administration of justice at home. Herein he served the purposes of the kingdom of providence, and of that God who *sits in the throne judging right*; and was an eminent type of the Messiah, the *sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre*. H.—This idea of equal justice to all, and especially to those who had no helper, was a very beautiful one in David's eyes. It gathered round it those bright and happy features which in the seventy-second Psalm are associated with the administration of another King. The thought is one on which the Psalmist dwells with great delight. "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." So far from need and poverty repelling him, they attract him. His interest and his sympathy are moved by the cry of the destitute. And in this we find the features of that higher government of David's Son which shows so richly His most gracious nature. The cry of sorrow and need, as it rose from this dark world, did not repel, but rather attracted, Him. Though the woes of man sprang from his own misdeeds, He gave Himself to bear them and carry their guilt away. All were in the lowest depths of spiritual poverty, but for that reason His hand was the more freely offered for their help. W. G. B.

16-18. A summary notice of the internal administration of the kingdom, with a list of David's chief officers of state, is appended to the account of his wars. Another list of these officers is given in ch. 20 : 23-26. A similar list of Solomon's officers is to be found in 1 K. 4 : 1-6. The principal civil officers of the king's court were the Counsellor, the Recorder or Remembrancer, the Scribe or Secretary of State, the King's Companion or Friend, and, in the later years of his reign, the Superintendent of the Levy. These, together with the king's sons, who had the title of "Ministers," the two High-priests, the Commander-in-chief of the army, and the Captain of the body-guard, formed the king's privy council. A. F. K.

The systematic administration of his kingdom by King David was the fruit of a remarkable faculty of orderly arrangement that belonged to most of the great men of Israel. We see it in Abraham, in his prompt and successful marshalling of his servants to pursue and attack the kings of the East when they carried off Lot; we see it in Joseph, first collecting and then distributing the stores of food in Egypt; in Moses,

conducting that marvellous host in order and safety through the wilderness; and, in later times, in Ezra and Nehemiah, reducing the chaos which they found at Jerusalem to a state of order and prosperity which seemed to verify the vision of the dry bones. We see it in the Son of David, in the orderly way in which all His arrangements were made: the sending forth of the twelve Apostles and the seventy disciples, the arranging of the multitude when He fed the five thousand, and the careful gathering up of the fragments "that nothing be lost." In the spiritual kingdom, a corresponding order is demanded, and times of peace and rest in the Church are times when this development is specially to be studied. W. G. B.

David's conquests must have been considerable. The methods by which he subjected the immense territory between the frontiers of Egypt and the Euphrates must have given proof of uncommon military skill and prowess. Yet the sacred historian merely refers to them. His sufferings under Saul's persecutions, on the contrary, of which an ordinary historian would have made cursory mention, are in the Bible fully and graphically reported, because they formed the school in which the heart of that "man of God" was trained so as to make him truly a "man after God's heart." It is only from some incidental scraps of the sacred record that we know of David's extraordinary talents as a politician, a general, and a poet; but oftentimes it is from the most elaborate pictures that we obtain knowledge of his confidence in God in times of trouble, and of his deep contrition in times of sin and guilt. *De Liefde*.

Thus began the powerful reign of David, during which, by a series of successful wars, he rendered the kingdom of Israel not only independent of foreign domination, but even extended its northern and eastern boundary to the Euphrates, and raised himself to a position of power which inspired other nations with fear. Thus the kingship of David becomes the type of the kingdom of God which overcomes the world. David was himself filled with the idea of a theocratic ruler: his life and acts were founded on the one thought of being found as the servant of Jehovah, the God who had chosen him and taken him from the sheepfolds to feed His chosen people (Ps. 78 : 70-72). This is evident in several of his psalms,—in that mirror of kings (Ps. 101), in which he portrays a sovereign as a righteous judge, and in the song of thanksgiving (Ps. 18). O.

Section 264.

ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM : ECCLESIASTICAL, MILITARY, TRIBAL AND FOR REVENUE.

1 *Chron. Chs. 23 and 24 : Courses and Office of Priests and Levites.*

Ch. 25 : Courses and Service of Singers and Players in the Praise-Ministry of the House of God.

Ch. 26 : Courses of the Doorkeepers and the Treasure-Keepers of the House of God.

Ch. 27 : Monthly Courses of Chief Captains of the King's Host. Rulers over the Several Tribes. Receivers and Trustees of the Royal Revenue, as Annually Contributed from the Industries and Produce of the whole People.

Established upon the throne in the full maturity of his powers, his wisdom and capacity of organization are illustrated in the great work of his life, for which God had anointed and prepared him—the consolidation of the long dis-united tribes into an imperial nation. With a statesman's constructive genius he centralized the national power, and buttressed it with well-organized institutions of religion, education, justice, civil order, and even of industry. Many years passed ere the completion of this work, years of unbroken prosperity because years of trust and devotion, of pure aspiration and faithful toil. B.

The ordinances of David are mentioned as of a parallel validity with those of Moses in 2 *Chron. 23 : 18*. The worship of Israel was perfected by David, by the addition that he made to the ceremonial law, which we have an account of in the 23d, 24th, 25th, and 26th chapters of the First Book of Chronicles, consisting in the several orders and courses into which David divided the Levites, and the work and business to which he appointed them, different from what Moses had appointed them to ; and also in the divisions of the priests the sons of Aaron into four-and-twenty courses, assigning to every course their business in the house of the Lord, and their particular stated times of attendance there ; appointing some of the Levites to a new office, that of singers, and others to the several services of porters, treasurers, officers, and judges : and these ordinances of David were kept up henceforth in the church of Israel, as long as the Jewish Church lasted. Thus we find the several orders of priests, and the Levites, the porters, and singers, after the captivity. So we find the courses of the priests appointed by David still continuing in the New Testament ; so Zacharias the father of John the Baptist was a priest of the course of Abia ; which is the same with the course of Abijah ap-

pointed by David, that we here read of (24 : 10). *Edwards.*

It moves our veneration,—the majestic continuity of this holy office, the order of its courses reaching from the reign of King David, unbroken save by the short interruptions of captivity, and scarcely even then, for four of the courses returned to Jerusalem to take their places when the exile was over ;—the priesthood itself, dating back to the wilderness, reaching over a tract of centuries that saw the rising and falling of many empires,—its ranks very commonly embracing thousands of men. The sublimity of it is only heightened when we recall the nature of that ministry committed to them by God himself. Constant as the morning and evening that daily open and shut their gates on the eyes of men, they waited around that altar which steadfastly prefigured and prophesied the Redeemer ; they kept a sleepless watch over the fire on the altar of burnt-offerings, which typified Christ's eternal sacrifice, never letting it go out, day or night ; they “ fed the golden lamps outside the veil with sacred oil ;” they offered the daily sacrifices, morning and evening, at the door of the tabernacle ; they were always ready at hand to do the cleansing and comforting offices commanded in the law. F. D. H.

The great improvement in the organization effected by David related to the Levites. He made their former duties more definite ; divided them into classes, assigning to each its service ; and he very considerably enlarged the field of their labors. They were still employed as before to wait on the priests and perform multitudinous services in purifying, cleansing, etc. ; also in preparing the shew-bread and the materials for meat-offerings, etc., as we see in 23 : 28-32. They were also employed as porters, having charge of the gates ; as scribes and recorders ; and, not least, as treasurers—an important function after the large accession of con-

separated wealth which came in from the spoils of war (26 : 20-28). The directions in which their service was greatly enlarged were chiefly these three : the service of instruction ; the service of civil officers and judges ; and the service of song. Very distinct reference to their service as teachers among the people appears in the history of the reformation under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17 : 9) ; also under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30 : 22) ; and under Josiah (2 Chron. 35 : 3). Very probably this branch of their duties was a growth, advancing from the time of David onward. Much the same may be said of their functions as civil judges, this service, like that of public instruction, resulting from the fact that they were by profession devoted largely to the study of the Hebrew law. We read here (26 : 29) that David assigned "Chenaiah and his sons for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges." Jehoshaphat made them prominent in the capacity of judges (2 Chron. 19 : 8-11). But by far the most important change made by David in the service of the Levites lay in the direction of sacred song. This was chiefly if not entirely a new service—a new appendage to the religious worship at the tabernacle. The provisions made for it were at once systematic and ample. As "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," who said of himself, "The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue," it was David's peculiar honor, not only for the Jewish Church, but for the Church Universal to the end of time, to direct that part of God's worship which is the best utterance of the heart, the tuneful notes of praise, inseparably blended with prayer and with the utterance of Divine truth. A great truth is expressed by the common title which names the whole book "The Psalms of David ;" for he founded psalmody as an institution, taught it to Asaph and his other immediate successors, and gave the model which all later psalmists followed. While he thus furnished the matter of psalmody, he regulated its manner, by arranging for the first time a full choral service. To this office David, in conjunction with the chiefs of the Levites, set apart three families, one from each of the three houses of the tribe, the Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites. They were *prophets* as well as singers, "to prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals ;" and they handed down their art from generation to generation by a systematic course of instruction, "the teacher as well as the scholar." These families were those of Asaph, the son of Berechiah the Gershonite, the chief singer, and also distinguished as a seer ; of Heman the Kohathite, son of Joel, and

grandson of the Prophet Samuel, and himself "the king's seer in the words of God ;" and of Jeduthun (or Ethan), a Merarite, who is also called "the king's seer." The names of each of these leaders are found in the titles of particular Psalms ; and the tripartite division was observed till the Captivity, and probably restored after the return. At first they were divided between the ark at Jerusalem and the tabernacle at Gibeon, the family of Asaph being assigned to the former, and those of Heman and Jeduthun to the latter. The three families numbered 288 principal singers, divided by lot into twenty-four courses of twelve in each ; but the total of the Levites engaged in praising Jehovah "with the instruments which David made" was 4000. P. S.

On this whole subject the passage (25 : 1-7) is classic, showing that those men were not mere *performers*—professional yet heartless singers and players on instruments ; but they poured their souls forth in sacred song ; "*prophesied*" the phrase is—"prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord." Due training in music was not neglected, for we read that they were *instructed* in the songs of the Lord, even all that were skilful—in number, 288. It is noticeable that this service of song was not merely occasional (as seems to have been the case before David) but was constant, for after locating the ark in its sacred tent, they "left there before the ark, Asaph and his brethren, to *minister before the ark continually* as every day's work required" (1 Chron. 16 : 37). Another allusion (1 Chron. 23 : 30) speaks of the office of these Levite singers "to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even." In the standard passages in 1 Chronicles which describe David's reorganization of the tabernacle worship and the introduction of music, we are not informed definitely at what stage in the course of sacrificial worship music and song were introduced—whether they preceded the offering of sacrifice, followed, or accompanied simultaneously. But in the historical account of the great passover under Hezekiah, the desired information appears in full. Having put the Levite choir in position with the orchestra also (instruments) "Hezekiah commanded to proceed with the burnt-offering ; and, *when the burnt-offering began*, the song of the Lord *began also* with the trumpets and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded ; and *all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished*. And when they had made an end of offering, the

king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped" (2 Chron. 29 : 25-30). Thus sacred song strictly *accompanied* the service of the burnt-offering till it was ended ; after which, all, king and people, reverently bowed themselves and worshipped.

Whether the music of that age would be pronounced "classic" in our own, we have absolutely no means of deciding. Yet of this we may be certain, it was *music*, the harmony of sweet sounds. It had the power to lift up human souls to a true devotional enthusiasm. It bore on high the outgoings of devout thanksgiving, praise, and adoration ; it stirred pious souls to their depths of love and grateful trust ; and, best of all, was well pleasing to God. Of the poetry of those songs, we fortunately have ample means of judging. If the music was worthy of the poetry—equal to it in beauty and in power, we can afford to wish it had come down to our age in all its glory. That it made the tabernacle worship attractive, inspiring, impressive—a most effective means of reviving true piety in Israel, there can be no manner of doubt. Such hallowed songs, embodying and impressing such lofty sentiments, bringing God so near to men and lifting men so near to God ; and all this backed up by the earnest example and the noble enthusiasm of a king whom to know was to esteem and to honor—these influences and impulses must have wrought a great reviving in the piety of the Hebrew people. H. C.

It would be taking a very narrow view of the duties of the Levites if we regarded them as limited to their services at the sanctuary. They were to read the volume of the Law publicly every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. This public and solemn periodical instruction, though eminently useful, was not the entire of their duty ; they were bound from the spirit of this ordinance to take care that at all times the aged should be improved, and the children be instructed in the knowledge and fear of God, the adoration of His majesty, and the observance of His Law. They acquired such influence and reverence among the people as were necessary to secure attention to their instructions ; and they were led to study the rules of moral conduct, the principles of equity, and, above all, the Mosaic code, with unceasing attention ; but they were not laid under any vows of celibacy, or monastic austerity and retirement, and thus abstracted from the intercourse and feelings of social life. Thus circumstanced, they were assuredly well calculated to answer the purpose of their institution, to preserve and consolidate

the union of all the other tribes, and to instruct and forward the poor in knowledge, virtue, and piety. *Dean Graves.*

27 : 1-15. The general military arrangements of the kingdom were made on the same principle as the distribution of the priests and Levites. The men who bore arms were divided into twelve courses of twenty-four thousand each ; these were regularly officered ; and for one month of each year the officers, and probably the men of one of the twelve courses, attended in succession. W. G. B.—David's plan for maintaining the discipline of his army was the calling out of a part of the Hebrew militia for a month's duty every year. Twenty-four thousand soldiers were gathered into a camp of exercise at Jerusalem, as we would term it, for a month's training at a time. The chiefs of these twelve brigades were almost all men who had been trained along with David in the hardships of desert warfare. *Sime.*

27 : 16-22. Whatever changes David introduced in the central government, he did not supersede the local government of the tribes. Each tribe had still its prince or ruler, and continued, under a general superintendence from the king, to conduct its local affairs. The supreme council of the nation continued to assemble on occasions of great national importance ; and though its influence could not have been so great as it was before the institution of royalty, it remained an integral element in the constitution ; and in the time of Rehoboam, through its influence and organization, the kingdom of the ten tribes was set up almost without a struggle.

27 : 25-31. In developing the material resources of the country, King David seems, with rigorous conscientiousness, to have applied the rule of Christ—"let nothing be lost." He had storehouses in the fields, in the cities, in the villages, and in the castles ; there were vineyards and wine-cellars, and cellars of oil, superintended each by appointed officers ; in different valleys, herds and flocks grazed under the care of royal herdsmen and shepherds ; an officer, skilled in agriculture, presided over the tillage of the fields ; the sycamore and olive trees were under the eye of skilful foresters ; nothing was wasted ; nothing done lazily ; all was regularity, order, and care. W. G. B.—While the management of the crown estates and revenues was thus intrusted to a number of officers stationed in different parts of the kingdom, the maintenance of law and order was committed to a numerous body of magistrates and judges (verses 16-22) : each tribe was placed under the government of a prince or ruler. Thus far the scanty

notices preserved in Chronicles indicate the existence of a thorough system of internal administration, though they do not enable us to determine its details.

David's reign was always looked back to as the golden age of the nation, the type of a still more glorious age to which the national hope looked forward as the crown and consummation of its destiny. Himself a warrior, he led the nation to victory ; himself a prophet, and the pupil of one of the greatest of the prophets, he sympathized with the prophetic work, and yielded himself, without losing his royal dignity, to prophetic guidance ; himself, though not by descent a priest, performing priestly functions, he was the patron of the hierarchy ; and thus for a brief space, all the strongest and noblest powers of the nation were brought into harmony, and full scope given to their influences. A. F. K.

The age of David seems to have been recognized almost at once by the Jews themselves as the grandest epoch that the nation has as yet known ; as we can now see that it has never since been surpassed. Hence the record of it has been preserved with a fulness of detail found nowhere else in the historical books of the Bible. Everything is of interest that belongs to that glorious time ; every one is of importance whose fortunes are entwined with the career of that glorious king. Hence we have a full account, not merely (as in the case of Saul) of the

opening and close of his reign, but of the whole of it. Hence also we have a very vivid account of a great deal of David's life previous to his ascending the throne. And in the Psalms of David we have the outpourings of his spirit and the secret workings of his soul, the key not only to that age and that reign, but to the human heart throughout all ages. We have the rare privilege of comparing the picture unconsciously drawn by himself in his songs with that which the native historians give us of him. Thus we are able to penetrate to the springs of the actions which they record, and also to judge how the events in which he shared told on that noble and tender spirit. *Plummer.*

The glorious days of King David, which afterward became the national ideal of a polity, were days of the most faithful adherence to the Mosaic forms of worship. No Jew could thoughtfully ponder upon those prosperous days, and not remember that the son of Jesse inaugurated his reign by burning the Philistine images at Baalperizim, sanctified his capture of the stronghold of Zion by making it the central sanctuary, brought the ark to its resting-place with songs and sacrifices, coveted beyond conquest the honor of transforming the Tent into the Temple of witness, completed the organization of the priestly service which Samuel had begun, and laid his genius under contribution to provide psalms, which perpetually testified to his joyful recognition of the spiritual advantages of the tabernacle service. *Cave.*

Section 265.

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCES AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM.

2 SAMUEL 22 : 1-51.

22 1 AND David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul : and he said,

The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, even mine ;

3 The God of my rock, in him will I trust ; My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge ;

My saviour, thou savest me from violence.

4 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised :

So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 For the waves of death compassed me, The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

6 The cords of Sheol were round about me : The snares of death came upon me.

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yea, I called unto my God : And he heard my voice out of his temple, And my cry came into his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled, The foundations of heaven moved And were shaken, because he was wroth.

9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, And fire out of his mouth devoured : Coals were kindled by it.

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| <p>10 He bowed the heavens also, and came
down ;
And thick darkness was under his feet.</p> <p>11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly :
Yea, he was seen upon the wings of the
wind.</p> <p>12 And he made darkness pavilions round
about him,
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the
skies.</p> <p>13 At the brightness before him
Coals of fire were kindled.</p> <p>14 The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered his voice.</p> <p>15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered
them ;
Lightning, and discomfited them.</p> <p>16 Then the channels of the sea appeared,
The foundations of the world were laid
bare,
By the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.</p> <p>17 He sent from on high, he took me ;
He drew me out of many waters ;</p> <p>18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From them that hated me ; for they were
too mighty for me.</p> <p>19 They came upon me in the day of my
calamity :
But the LORD was my stay.</p> <p>20 He brought me forth also into a large
place :
He delivered me, because he delighted in
me.</p> <p>21 The LORD rewarded me according to my
righteousness :
According to the cleanness of my hands
hath he recompensed me.</p> <p>22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my
God.</p> <p>23 For all his judgments were before me :
And as for his statutes, I did not depart
from them.</p> <p>24 I was also perfect toward him,
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.</p> <p>25 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me
according to my righteousness :
According to my cleanness in his eyesight.</p> <p>26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself
merciful,
With the perfect man thou wilt shew thy-
self perfect ;</p> <p>27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure ;
And with the perverse thou wilt shew thy-
self froward.</p> <p>28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save :</p> | <p>But thine eyes are upon the haughty, that
thou mayest bring them down.</p> <p>29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD :
And the LORD will lighten my darkness.</p> <p>30 For by thee I run upon a troop :
By my God do I leap over a wall.</p> <p>31 As for God, his way is perfect :
The word of the LORD is tried ;
He is a shield unto all them that trust in
him.</p> <p>32 For who is God, save the LORD ?
And who is a rock, save our God ?</p> <p>33 God is my strong fortress :
And he guideth the perfect in his way.</p> <p>34 He maketh his feet like hinds' feet :
And setteth me upon my high places.</p> <p>35 He teacheth my hands to war ;
So that mine arms do bend a bow of
brass.</p> <p>36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy
salvation :
And thy gentleness hath made me great.</p> <p>37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
And my feet have not slipped.</p> <p>38 I have pursued mine enemies, and de-
stroyed them ;
Neither did I turn again till they were con-
sumed.</p> <p>39 And I have consumed them, and smitten
them through, that they cannot arise :
Yea, they are fallen under my feet.</p> <p>40 For thou hast girded me with strength
unto the battle :
Thou hast subdued under me those that
rose up against me.</p> <p>41 Thou hast also made mine enemies turn
their backs unto me,
That I might cut off them that hate
me.</p> <p>42 They looked, but there was none to save ;
Even unto the LORD, but he answered them
not.</p> <p>43 Then did I beat them small as the dust of
the earth,
I did stamp them as the mire of the streets,
and did spread them abroad.</p> <p>44 Thou also hast delivered me from the striv-
ings of my people ;
Thou hast kept me to be the head of the
nations :
A people whom I have not known shall
serve me.</p> <p>45 The strangers shall submit themselves
unto me :
As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey
me.</p> <p>46 The strangers shall fade away,</p> |
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And shall come trembling out of their close
places.
47 The LORD liveth ; and blessed be my rock ;
And exalted be the God of the rock of my
salvation :
48 Even the God that executeth vengeance for
me,
And bringeth down peoples under me,
49 And that bringeth me forth from mine
enemies :

Yea, thou liftest me up above them that
rise up against me :
Thou deliverest me from the violent man.
50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O
LORD, among the nations,
And will sing praises unto thy name.
51 Great deliverance giveth he to his king :
And sheweth lovingkindness to his anoint-
ed,
To David and to his seed, forevermore.

This chapter supplies an obvious link between the history of David and his authorship as the great Psalmist of Israel, from whom there emanated those sacred and devotional compositions which have proved the delight and exercise of the Church in all ages. We can see a reason for the trials of his checkered life and experience, in these the precious and abiding fruits of it. It is interesting thus to connect the Book of Psalms with the direct narrative of Scripture, and to behold another of the innumerable manifestations which can be appealed to for the genuineness of both. T. C.

This magnificent hymn is substantially identical with Ps. 18. It was written, as the title indicates, when David's triumphs over his enemies at home and abroad were still recent. Its composition may with much probability be assigned to the period of peace described in ch. 7 : 1 ; but must be placed after Nathan's visit, as verse 51 seems clearly to refer to the great promise made through him. The free and joyous tone of the Psalm, and its bold expressions of conscious integrity, also point to the earlier years of David's reign rather than the later, overclouded as these were by the fatal consequences of his sin. . . . The culmination of David's prosperity is celebrated in this Psalm, written probably in that period of peace in which he conceived the wish to build an house for Jehovah. It is the fitting expression of a heart overflowing with praise and thanksgiving, and is unrivalled for the magnificence of its poetry and the sublimity of its thought. A. F. K.

In all his life thus far we see a high poetic genius, translating into devout song his successive experiences as shepherd, warrior, outcast, statesman, and king. A natural artist in melody and song, an inspired creator of beauty in the sweetest or saddest forms of thought and expression, transferring every hallowed sentiment, every just, pure, lofty conception and aspiration, into strains of incomparable sublimity, this Master-Psalmist of Israel has wrought an imperishable work of cheer and help, of comfort and rejoicing, for all classes of God's true wor-

shippers in all ages of time. B.—There is the whole music of the human heart, when touched by the hand of the Maker, in all its tones that whisper or that swell, for every hope and fear, for every joy and pang, for every form of strength and languor, of disquietude and rest. There are developed all the innermost relations of the human soul to God, built upon the platform of a covenant of love and sonship that had its foundations in the Messiah. W. E. Gladstone. —The intimate communing with Him in prayer and praise, which is characteristic of the Psalms of David, marks a new advance in the relation of man to God. Now was laid the foundation of that Psalter in which for all succeeding time men have found the expression and the echo of their deepest thoughts and highest aspirations. Rich and varied as are the tones of the many voices which combine to form the Psalter, they are scarcely more rich and varied than the tones of the single voice of him who was its Founder ; passing as they do through every variation of jubilant praise and thanksgiving, unshaken trust in God, keenest suffering, bitter sorrow for sin, heartfelt repentance. A. F. K.

Analysis of the Psalm. (1) Introduction : the leading thought of the song, an adoring acknowledgment of what God had been and was to David (verses 2-4). (2) A narrative of the Divine interpositions on his behalf, embracing his dangers, his prayers, and the Divine deliverances in reply (verses 5-19). (3) The grounds of his protection and success (verses 20-30). (4) References to particular acts of God's goodness in various parts of his life, interspersed with reflections on the Divine character, from all which the assurance is drawn that that goodness would be continued to him and his successors, and would secure through coming ages the welfare and extension of the kingdom. And here we observe what is so common in the Psalms : a gradual rising above the idea of a mere earthly kingdom ; the type passes into the antitype ; the kingdom of David melts, as in a dissolving view, into the kingdom of the Messiah ; thus a

more elevated tone is given to the song, and the assurance is conveyed to every believer that as God protected David and his kingdom, so shall He protect and glorify the kingdom of His Son forever. W. G. B.

2, 3. The imagery, by which David describes so emphatically all that Jehovah had been to him as a Deliverer from his enemies, is derived from the experiences of his war-like life, and particularly of his flight from Saul. The cliff where he had escaped from Saul, the stronghold in the wilderness of Judah or the fastnesses of Engedi, "the rocks of the wild goats," were all emblems of Him who had been throughout his true Refuge and Deliverer.

3. *The God of my rock* = my strong God : but it is better to alter the vowel points and read as in the Psalm, "my God, my Rock." The title Rock is frequently used to describe the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of God. A. F. K.

The feeling that recognized God as the author of all his deliverances was intensely strong, as is indicated by the use of every expression that can be accumulated—"My rock, my portion, my deliverer ; the God of my rock, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my high tower, my refuge, my Saviour." He takes no credit to himself ; gives no glory to his captains ; does not ascribe his safety in any case to his skill, or to their bravery ; but with admirable humility gives all the credit to God. In the intensity of the gaze which it fixed on Him who is invisible, the eye of faith lost sight, for the time, of the human instruments through whom much of the work was done. He who, in the depths of his penitence, saw but one injured Being, and said, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned"—now, at the height of his prosperity, sees but one gracious Being, and exclaims, in the same spirit, "He only is my rock and my salvation." It was a great attainment for a soldier, whose besetting sin is the love of glory, thus to overcome the desire for human applause, and give all the glory to God.

4. When David comes to express his dependence on God, he very specially sets Him before his mind as "worthy to be praised." He calls to mind the gracious character of God,—not an austere God, reaping where He has not sown, and gathering where He has not strewed, but "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." "This doctrine," says Luther, "is in tribulation the most ennobling and truly golden. One cannot imagine what assistance such praise of God is in pressing danger. For as soon as

you begin to praise God the sense of the evil will also begin to abate, the comfort of your heart will grow ; and then God will be called on with confidence. Some who cry to the Lord are not heard, because they do not praise the Lord when they cry to Him, they have looked only to their own bitterness. But no one gets deliverance from evil by looking simply upon his evil and becoming alarmed at it ; he can get deliverance only by rising above his evil, hanging it on God, and having respect to His goodness. Oh, hard counsel, doubtless, and a rare thing truly, in the midst of trouble to conceive of God as sweet, and worthy to be praised ; and when He has removed Himself from us and is incomprehensible, even then to regard Him more intensely than we regard our misfortune that keeps us from Him ! Only let one try it, and make the endeavor to praise God, though in little heart for it ; he will soon experience an enlightenment."

5, 6. First, there is a vivid picture of his troubles. With Saul's javelins flying at his head in the palace, or his best troops scouring the wilderness in search of him ; with Syrian hosts bearing down on him like the waves of the sea, and a confederacy of nations conspiring to swallow him up, he might well speak of the waves of death and the cords of Hades. He evidently desires to describe the extremest peril and distress that can be conceived, a situation where the help of man is vain indeed. **7-13.** Then, after a brief account of his calling upon God, comes a most animated description of God coming to his help. The description is ideal, but it gives a vivid view how the Divine energy is roused when any of God's children are in distress. When the cry reached heaven that David was in trouble, the earthquake and the lightning and all the other messengers of heaven were sent out to his aid ; nay, these were not enough ; God Himself flew, riding on a cherub, yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. Faith saw God bestirring Himself for his deliverance, as if every agency of nature had been set in motion on his behalf. W. G. B.

9. Smoke arose in his nostril, and fire from his mouth did devour : hot coals came burning from him. The startling boldness of the language will be intelligible if the distinctive character of Hebrew symbolism is borne in mind. It is no "gross anthropomorphism," for the Psalmist did not intend that the mind's eye should clothe his figure in a concrete form. His aim is vividly to express the manifestation of the wrath of God, and he does so in figures which are intended to

remain as purely mental conceptions, not to be realized as though God appeared in any visible shape. A. F. K.

14-16. His deliverance was conspicuous and complete. He saw God's hand stretched out with remarkable distinctness. There could be no more doubt that it was God that rescued him from Saul than that it was He that snatched Israel from Pharaoh when literally "the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils." W. G. B.

20. *He delivered me, because he delighted in me.* The deliverance came not from common providence, but covenant love; he was herein treated as a favorite; so he perceived by the communications of Divine grace and comfort to his soul, with these deliverances, and the communion he had with God in them. H.—This was the ground of God's deliverance, and it now becomes the leading thought of the Psalm. Compare Matt. 3 : 17, where the Greek word for "I am well pleased" is the same as that used in the Septuagint. The reference becomes doubly significant if it is borne in mind that the theocratic king was called God's son. A. F. K.

21. According to my righteousness. This is no vain-glorious boasting of his own merits, but a testimony to the faithfulness of Jehovah to guard and reward His faithful servants. David does not lay claim to a perfect righteousness, but to sincerity and single-heartedness in his devotion to God. Compare his own testimony (1 S. 26 : 23), God's testimony (1 K. 14 : 8), and the testimony of history (1 K. 11 : 4 ; 15 : 5), to his essential integrity. Is not this conscious rectitude, this "princely heart of innocence," a clear indication that the Psalm was written before his great fall? A. F. K.

It is impossible to read this Psalm without feeling that it is not pervaded by the spirit of the self-righteous man. It is pervaded by a profound sense of dependence on God, and of obligation to His mercy and love. Now that is the very opposite of the self-righteous spirit. We may surely find another way of accounting for such expressions used by David here. We may surely believe that all that was meant by him was to express the unswerving sincerity and earnestness with which he had endeavored to serve God, with which he had resisted every temptation to conscious unfaithfulness, with which he had resisted every allurements to idolatry on the one hand or to the neglect of the welfare of God's nation on the other. And David correctly describes the prevailing features

of his public endeavors. His public life was unquestionably marked by a sincere and commonly successful endeavor to follow the will of God. So if God is to prosper us, there must be an inner harmony between us and Him. If the habit of our life be opposed to God, the result can only be collision and rebuke. David was conscious of the inner harmony, and therefore he was able to rely on being supported and blessed. W. G. B.

26-28. He takes occasion here to lay down the established rules of God's proceedings with the children of men: He will do good to those that are upright in their hearts. As we are found toward God, he will be found toward us. God's mercy and grace will be the joy of those that are merciful and gracious; even the merciful need mercy, and they shall obtain it. God's uprightness, his justice and faithfulness, will be the joy of those that are upright, just, and faithful, toward God and man. God's purity and holiness will be the joy of those that are pure and holy, who therefore give thanks at the remembrance of it. And if any of these good people be *afflicted people*, he will save them, either out of their afflictions, or by and after them. On the other hand, those who turn aside to crooked ways, he will *lead forth with the workers of iniquity*, as he says in another psalm, *With the froward he will wrestle*; and those with whom God wrestles are sure to be foiled. *Woe unto him that strives with his Maker!* He will walk contrary to those that walk contrary to him, and be displeased with them. As for the haughty, his eyes are upon them, marking them out, as it were, to be brought down: for *he resists the proud*. H.

29-31. God's faithfulness is here attested by the Psalmist's experience. After celebrating God's goodness in delivering him from all the dangers which threatened his life, David goes on to describe how God had made him victorious over all his enemies. A. F. K.

36. Thy gentleness hath made me great. These words gather up into their brief utterance all the song of the great King David when he recounted his greatness, and reveal at once the secret of his greatness and the heart of his song. David knew God as few human souls have done. He knew Him as the Creator and the Judge, but when he comes to consider his own life, it is to the gentleness of God he turns. All the lights and shadows and depths and heights of his manifold spiritual life had this for their source, and only this: the gentleness of God. The gentleness of God is the secret spring of all the worth to which the great ones of God's kingdom have ever reached. Above

and underneath all virtues are the dews and fountain-springs of the gentleness of God. From verge to verge, over all the sea of redeemed life, rises the thankful, joyous, self-abasing song, "Lamb of God, slain for us, Thy gentleness hath made us great." The work Christ came to accomplish was the bestowal of gentleness upon a world which had lost the very elements of it. The light which shines from the Cross is the gentleness of God. He passed into the shadow of death, and there, with the gentleness of a Divine mother, laid His hand on the hand, His heart on the heart, of the very race which crucified Him, that He might overcome their enmity and bring them back to God. This is still the greatness of Christ as a Saviour and His power over the hearts of men. He is strong to save because He is long-suffering, and merciful, and generous. *A. Macleod.*

The Divine gentleness makes paths easy that rougher treatment would have made intolerable. And who of us that looks back but must own our obligations to the gentleness of God, the tender, forbearing, nay loving, treatment He has bestowed on us, even in the midst of our great provocations? W. G. B.—Most true it is that God carries a strong hand with us. He covers up no principle, tempers the exactness of no law. There is no connivance in his methods, no concealment of truths disagreeable and piercing, no proposition of compromise or halving, in a way of settlement. His Providence moves strong. His terrors flame out on the background of a wrathful sky. He thunders marvellously with his voice. And so his very gentleness stands glorious and strong and sovereignly majestic round us. Were he only soft or kind, bending like a willow to our wicked state, there were little to move and affect us even in his goodness itself. But when we look on him as the Almighty Rock, the immovable Governor and Keeper of the worlds, girding himself in all terrible majesty when he must, to let us know that

impunity in wrong is impossible, then it is that we behold him in the true meaning of his gentleness—how good! how firm! how adorably great! And yet while God is ever engaged to bring down our loftiness in evil and perversity, he is just as constantly engaged to make us loftier and stronger in everything desirable—in capacity, and power, and all personal majesty. We do not understand him, in fact, till we conceive it as a truth profoundly real and glorious, that he *wants to make us great*—great in will, great in the breadth and honest freedom of our intellect, great in courage, enthusiasm, self-respect, firmness, superiority to things and matters of condition; great in sacrifice and beneficence; great in sonship with Himself; great in being raised to such common counsel, and such intimate unity with him in his ends, that we do, in fact, reign with him. *Bushnell.*

44-46. In these verses the views of the Psalmist seem to sweep beyond the limits of an earthly kingdom. His eye seems to embrace the wide-spreading dominion of Messiah; at all events, he dwells on those features of his own kingdom that were typical of the all-embracing kingdom of the Gospel. It is interesting to mark the military aspect of the kingdom gliding into the missionary. Other psalms bring out more clearly this missionary element, exhibit David rejoicing in the widening limits of his kingdom, in the wider diffusion of the knowledge of the true God, and in the greater happiness and prosperity accruing to men. W. G. B.

50. The celebration of Jehovah's faithfulness to His servant is not to be confined within the narrow limits of Israel. His praise is to be proclaimed among the heathen, who, as they are brought under the dominion of His people, may also be brought to the knowledge of Jehovah. Compare Ps. 96 : 3, 10. This verse is quoted by Paul in Rom. 15 : 9, to prove that the Old Testament anticipated the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of salvation. *A. F. K.*

Section 266.

WAR WITH THE AMMONITES AND SYRIANS. FIRST VICTORY UNDER JOAB.
SECOND BATTLE WITH SYRIANS AND VICTORY UNDER DAVID.

2 SAMUEL 10 : 1-19. 1 CHRONICLES 19 : 1-19.

2 S. 10 : 1 AND it came to pass after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. And David said, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. So David sent by the hand

of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land
 3 of the children of Ammon. But the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their
 lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee?
 hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to over-
 4 throw it? So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and
 5 cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. When they
 told it unto David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king
 said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children
 of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand
 footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob twelve thousand
 7, 8 men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. And
 the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate of
 the city; and the Syrians of Zobah, and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by
 9 themselves in the field. Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and
 behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:
 10 and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother, and he put
 11 them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for
 me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will
 12 come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the
 13 cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good. So Joab and the people
 that were with him drew nigh unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.
 14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before
 Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and
 15 came to Jerusalem. And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel,
 16 they gathered themselves together. And Hadadezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that
 were beyond the River: and they came to Helam, with Shobach the captain of the host of
 17 Hadadezer at their head. And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, and
 passed over Jordan, and came to Helam, and came upon them, and set the battle in array against
 them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.

1 Chron. 19: 18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians *the*
men of seven thousand chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain
 19 of the host. And when all the kings that were the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were
 put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and served him: neither would
 the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

David had now reached the summit of his prosperity and power. The historian has now to record how he fell from that height into a sin which brought shame and suffering upon himself and disaster upon his kingdom. This war with the Ammonites is described in detail, because of its close connection with that act, which marked the fatal turning-point in David's reign. The war with the Ammonites is incidentally alluded to in ch. 8: 12 among David's other wars; and the war with the Syrians to which it led is not improbably the same as that recorded in ch. 8: 3-6. It is there related that Hadadezer sustained a crushing defeat, and that a great part of his vassals transferred their allegiance to David. The circumstances narrated here (verse 16) explain the otherwise obscure mention of the Euphrates in ch. 8: 3: the seat of war, the persons engaged, the results, and the general details, are so similar as to make it improbable that the narratives refer to two distinct wars.

It is easy to assign a reason for this repetition. There the account forms part of the collected summary of David's principal wars, as it was probably by far the most important and most distant of them: here it appears as a necessary pendant to the history of the Ammonite war, which is being related in full in order to lead up to and explain the circumstances of David's fall. A. F. K.

Hanun's Insult to David's Ambassadors.

4. The rights of ambassadors—the peculiar privileges belonging to their office, as representing the power from whom they came and as being still under its protection in a foreign land, were already well understood. We may therefore conceive the indignation of David when he heard that his ambassadors—men of rank and station—had been treated with the most gross indignity by the king of Ammon, under the pretence that they had come to spy the nakedness

of the land. He shaved off half their beards, and cut off the skirts of their robes, so as to leave half of their persons bare. *Kil.*—The shaving of the beard was one of the highest indignities that the malice of man could invent in those countries, where all people thought their hair the greatest ornament: insomuch that they never shaved their heads or their beards, except in case of mourning; and even in that case it was forbidden to the Israelites (Lev. 19:27). Thus when the Ammonites had caused one half of their beards to be shaven, they abhorred to cut the other. It is still a great mark of infamy among the Arabs to cut off the beard. *Patrick.*

6. The Ammonites did not wait for a formal declaration of war by David. Nor did they flatter themselves, when they came to their senses, that against one who had gained such renown as a warrior they could stand alone. Their insult to King David turned out a costly affair. To get assistance they had to give gold. The parallel passage in Chronicles gives a thousand talents of silver as the cost of the first bargain with the Syrians. These Syrian mercenaries came from various districts—Beth-rehob, Zoba, Beth-maacah, and Tob. Some of these had already been subdued by David; in other cases there was apparently no previous collision. *W. G. B.*

The text of Chronicles differs from that of Samuel in several points. It mentions the price paid to the Syrians, a thousand talents of silver, and names Medeba as the rendezvous where their forces assembled. The names of the countries from which the mercenaries were drawn are given as Mesopotamia, Maacah, and Zobah. Beth-rehob may be included under Mesopotamia. Tob is not mentioned; perhaps it was a dependency of Zobah, and is included under it. The contingent sent by each is not specified. The total number of thirty-two thousand besides the men of Maacah, agrees with the numbers here; but the reading *chariots* in the present text of 1 Chron. 19:7 can scarcely be right. Thirty-two thousand chariots would be a force of unexampled magnitude. The text of Samuel also seems to be defective, as the force doubtless had some cavalry and chariots and did not consist of infantry only.

8. At the entering in of the gate. This is generally supposed to be the gate of the Ammonite capital Rabbah. But the account in Chronicles states explicitly that the Syrian mercenaries mustered at Medeba, which was nearly twenty miles southwest of Rabbah, and clearly implies that it was the city which the Ammonites occupied. Further, it is evident from verse

9, which describes Joab as in danger of being crushed between the two forces, that the Syrians were at no great distance from the city. And how came the Syrian force to march past Rabbah to Medeba, if the Ammonites meant to make their stand at Rabbah? or how could Joab possibly have advanced to Rabbah, leaving this huge Syrian force in his rear? *A. F. K.*

12. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good. There are here four useful and practical lessons. (1) A lesson of mutual helpfulness.

"As occasion demands," says Joab, "thou shalt help me and I will help thee." He was neither so vain as to think he could not possibly need a brother's help, nor so mean as to dream of standing aloof in a brother's difficulty. God intends that we shall be indebted to each other, and if Joab has to come to the help of Abishai, Abishai has no more reason to be ashamed than Joab.

(2) A lesson of manly heroism. "Be of good courage and let us play the man." A hero is a man in the fullest sense of the word. There are heroes of the workshop, of the counter, of the office, of the market-place, on whose fortitude might be put quite as severe a strain as though they stood upon the battle-field, amid the glitter of cold steel or the rattle of musketry. If you are to play the part of the man, you must carefully cultivate the higher part of your nature. Lay the foundation of those intellectual and moral habits which will not only open up to you a vast range of elevating enjoyment, but will make you more capable of receiving the highest truth of all—the truth that concerns the kingdom of God. (3) A lesson of Christian patriotism. Great dangers put an edge upon true courage. "God and our country," was the cry of these two young men. It was a call to action and to danger, impelled by love to Israel and Israel's God. "Christian patriotism" was the term I used. You have no right to separate these words. The weal of our land is inseparably bound up with its religious condition. A true patriot will burn with desire to have his country leavened with real piety. (4) A lesson of trust and submission. "And the Lord will do that which seemeth Him good." I do not venture to say that Joab was a saint, but on this occasion, certainly, his conduct and language were admirable, and worthy of imitation. *J. T. Davidson.*

Of poor sauntering triflers, in human shape and men's apparel, we have enough; of literary Sybarites, bred on stories, fugitive poetry, and

monthly magazines ; of minute scholars, glorying in the niceties of metre and accent, college honors, and other tongues ; of dressed creatures that sweeten soirées and playhouses with their odors ; of things that flutter and die in the light of fashion, as moths about a lamp ; of religious professors that almost ask leave to serve Christ of the sons of Belial who surround them ; more than enough have we of such young men whose everlasting discourse is of the last amusement or the last scandal. But of MEN, spirits in earnest, souls that have an aim, bent toward some object, and that a great one ; bearing and doing, training themselves by toil, by temperance, by self-denial, by prayer, for the benefit of the greatest number, it must be confessed with lamentation that we have but few. And if, as we suppose, the times which are coming on the earth will demand such men, strong to do and strong to suffer, our only mode of providing them is to deal with the young, and to pour the plastic masses into the shaping mould. J. W. A.

13, 14. The Syrians were routed by Joab, and the Ammonites fled before Abishai, and retreated to their walled city Rabbah. B.—**15-18.** But the Syrians were not disposed to yield without another conflict. Determined to do his utmost, Hadadezer, king of the Syrians of Zobah, sent across the Euphrates, and prevailed on their neighbors there to join them in the effort to crush the power of David. That a very large number of these Mesopotamian Syrians responded to the invitation of Hadadezer is apparent from the number of the slain (verse 18). The matter assumed so serious an aspect that David himself was now constrained to take the field, at the head of "all Israel." The Syrian troops were commanded by Shobach, who appears to have been a distinguished general. It must have been a death-struggle between the Syrian power and the power of David. But again the victory was with the Israelites, and among the slain were the men of seven thousand chariots and forty thousand horsemen, along with Shobach, captain of the Syrian host. It must have been a most decisive victory, for after it took place all the states that had been tributary to Hadadezer transferred their allegiance to David. W. G. B.—The power of Hadadezer was so entirely broken that he no more appears in history. The Syrian tributary

princes, who had been obliged to join him, made their own terms with David, and left the Ammonites to their own resources. *Kil.*—Thus the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 15 : 18) and repeated to Joshua (ch. 1 : 4), that the borders of Israel should extend to the river Euphrates, was performed at length. H.

Ammon offered but a feeble resistance to the Hebrews after the battle of Helam. All their cities except Rabbah were taken in the beginning of the following year. Rabbah itself was closely beleaguered. Its strong position, the existence of a water supply within its walls, and the inability of the Hebrews to conduct siege operations, gave the survivors of the nation a respite from destruction. But the war yields in importance to events which were then taking place at Jerusalem. *Sime.*

The close of the great wars of conquest just referred to brings us to the fiftieth year of David's age and the twentieth of his reign. It brings us also to the saddest and the most deplorable event in his history. The period of David's greatest worldly prosperity seems not to have been by any means one of corresponding prosperity as regarded his spiritual condition. Probably worldly success had itself been a snare to him. Whatever the true cause, it is evident there was a general falling away of spirituality and conscientiousness in the service of God on the part of David about this period. *Lee.*—The period which had now elapsed of David's reign comprehends a space of about twenty years ; during which he had waged several wars, all righteously begun, and successfully ended. He had fought no battle during that period which he did not win, and assaulted no city which he did not take. In a civil war of five years' continuance he never once lifted up his sword against a subject ; and, at the end of it, he punished no rebel, he remembered no offence, he revenged no injury, but the murder of his rival. To crown all, with all his rare and true felicities, their only sure source and security, his religion and his innocence, still remained with him ; and, had his innocence still remained with him, his happiness would have continued also. But a new and sad scene, very different from the past, is now to be opened. *Delaney.*

Section 267.

DAVID'S GREAT AND MANIFOLD CRIMES.

2 SAMUEL 11 : 1-27. 1 CHRONICLES 20 : 1.

2 S. 11 : 1 AND it came to pass, at the return of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel ; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass at eventide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house : and from the roof he saw a woman bathing ; and the woman was very
3 beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is
4 not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite ? And David sent messengers, and took her ; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her (for she was purified
5 from her uncleanness) ; and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived ; and
6 she sent and told David, and said, I am with child. And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me
7 Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David asked of him how Joab did, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered.
8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out
9 of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.
10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Art thou not come from a journey ? wherefore didst thou not go down unto thine house ?
11 And Uriah said unto David, the ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in booths ; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field ; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife ? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I
12 will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David
13 had called him, he did eat and drink before him ; and he made him drunk : and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house
14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand
15 of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest
16 battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab kept watch upon the city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he knew that
17 valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab : and there fell
18 some of the people, even of the servants of David ; and Uriah the Hittite died also. Then
19 Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war ; and he charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling all the things concerning the war unto the king,
20 it shall be that, if the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore went ye so nigh
21 unto the city to fight ? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall ? who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth ? did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, that he died at Thebez ? why went ye so nigh the wall ? then shalt thou say, Thy servant
22 Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that
23 Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.
24 And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall ; and some of the king's servants be
25 dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another : make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it : and encourage thou him. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she
26 made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David
27 had done displeased the LORD.

Beautiful and most promising was the state of the nation at this period of David's life. Unbounded prosperity had flowed into the country. Every enemy had been subdued. There was no division in the kingdom, and no one likely to cause any. The king was greatly honored by his people, and highly popular. The arrangements which he had made, both for the civil and spiritual administration of the kingdom, were working beautifully, and producing their natural fruits. All things seemed to be advancing the great purpose of God in connection with Israel. Let this state of things but last, and surely the consummation will be reached. The promise to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will be fulfilled, and the promised Seed will come very speedily to diffuse His blessing over all the families of the earth. But into this fair paradise the serpent contrived to creep, and the consequence was another fall. W. G. B.

David's career thus far has been one of singular excellence and attractiveness—not without great weaknesses, and blemishes of character, and many sins. Under Divine direction, and with Divine help, he engaged and conquered all neighboring hostile nations, and made them tributaries of Israel. He established a perfect system in the administration of all affairs, religious, judicial, and industrial, and so wrought the dissevered tribes into a united organic nation, holding imperial power. During the first half of his reign all his acts and all God's Providences tended toward this ultimate culmination of his power, and of the greatness of his kingdom. And through all his constant exposures to selfish pride and vain glory David stood fast in his integrity, proved himself a man after God's own heart. But there came a time when, through the sudden blinding power of evil passions, the pure man became vile, and under the prolonged madness of unrepented evil, for nearly a year deliberately planned crime after crime, adding baseness to lust and falsehood, and murder to hypocrisy. And from that hour of his great sin began the sad contrast to his previous history. That one grievous offence against God and man shadowed and embittered the latter half of his reign. Following it came the sorest personal and domestic griefs, an unrecovered loss of self-respect and previous peace of heart, civil distractions and revolts. But the same Inspiration that faithfully records all the enormity and aggravations of his sin, that reveals its life-long effects of sadness and calamity, discloses the depth and genuineness of his repentance, and the greatness of God's pardoning mercy. We

have only to read, with our souls alive to the intense feeling of the writer, the 51st and 32d Psalms, and we shall learn that this royal penitent, though long and severely chastened, was forgiven. A sad contrast indeed find we in his latter Psalms, and yet there comes through all at length a burst of joy, the joy of sanctified, penitent grief! The "joy of God's salvation" was "*restored*" unto his broken, contrite spirit! B.

Chronologically, these events fall within the period of David's last great war—that against Ammon and Rabbah. This one sin of David's known life is recognized by the sacred historian (1 K. 15 : 5) as so far surpassing all his other sins in enormity that it might be said he did that which was right in all else, "turning not aside from the things commanded of God, *save only* in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." This great sin had in it almost every possible element of aggravation. It was flagrant adultery, for David already had not one wife only, but many; and Bath-sheba had a husband—one of the noblest of men, whose record as a brave, patriotic, self-denying warrior is pre-eminently spotless and grand. David's sin included not adultery alone, but *murder*—the deliberate murder of this heroic and self-sacrificing man, Uriah the Hittite. One sin naturally leads on to more sinning. Thus David sought first and desperately to cover his iniquity. Could he not bring Uriah, the husband, home to his own house and bed? He orders him sent back from the field of war; converses with him as if no dreadful guilt lay heavy on his soul; and then dismisses him to his home. "There followed him a mess of meat from the king." Surely (thought David) he will carry that home to his wife. No; the warrior slept with David's servants at the palace gate, ready for the stern duties of the soldier's life. But David cannot afford to be baffled, and therefore summons Uriah to his presence again and urges him to go to his home, but with the result only of bringing out more strongly the heroic spirit of the true warrior. "My Lord Joab and the servants of my king camp in the open fields;" my country calls me to like sacrifices; and so long as she does no home attractions can be heeded. Then it occurs to David that this heroic spirit may be overcome by wine. He therefore tempted him to eat and drink, "and made him drunk." Even then he failed of his purpose. In the next stage David rushed to the horrid purpose to take Uriah's life—for how could he meet the disclosure of his guilty connection with Uriah's wife, especially since Uriah himself is a man so noble, of a nature so

pure and lofty? Did he let Joab into this guilty secret? He found him in this case a ready instrument for his purpose—viz, to put Uriah into the hottest of the fight, and then retire the supporting column and let him fall in battle. This letter of instructions to Joab, he sent by the hand of Uriah with no fear that he would break the seal and come at the awful secret. And he knew Uriah too well to fear that he would retreat before the foe even if all others did. Thus David slew Uriah by the sword of the warriors of Ammon.

Some of the points of peculiar aggravation in this double sin of David are presented tersely and with telling force in the supposed case by which the prophet Nathan introduces his rebuke of his king. The poor man's one lamb—his household pet; nursed in his bosom; fed at his table; to him as a daughter—this lamb is torn away by his rich neighbor, who had lambs enough and to spare—the heartless tyrant! The case kindled David's indignation; but, oh, how did the application of it—"Thou art the man," pierce his soul with daggers of self-condemnation! He felt every word as a burning arrow. Conviction brought forth confession, penitent grief, and imploring cries for mercy.

Now let it be distinctly noted: these sins not only had their aggravating circumstances, but *the inspired pen records them*. Not one is withheld. Not only is the crime charged upon David, but its points of special enormity are thoroughly unfolded. There is no attempt to suppress a single fact bearing upon the aggravation and guilt of these sins. Moreover, there is no concealment or suppression of the fact that these great sins were utterly displeasing to God. He did, indeed, forgive the royal penitent; but he took care that these dreadful sins should be rebuked over and over again; brought up to David's sad remembrance; brought out in sunlight before the nation and before the world. First, the babe is smitten, and after seven days of lingering life and prolonged suffering—David meanwhile on the ground, weeping, fasting, praying—the child dies. Then came those dreadful scenes of lust and murder among his own sons and daughters—Tamar ravished; the guilty Amnon, David's first-born, murdered by his brother Absalom:—how terribly suggestive of his own example before these very children! How hot with scorching rebuke! What griefs harrowed his sensitive spirit when it became known to him and to all Israel that Absalom had outraged his father's bed! Then he drove that father from his palace, city, and throne. Bit-terest of all, Absalom dies in his sins! David

could bear the vilest indignities; the basest ingratitude toward himself; the foulest treason; the sadness of enforced exile; but oh! when the tidings came that Absalom was dead—his own guilty son dead—gone—lost, amid the horrors of unpardoned sin—alas, this filled his cup of woe! Did he not then recall his own sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite? Alas, how does God bring the sins of men to their remembrance, and make them feel in the depth of their souls that it is a fearful thing to sin!

Another line of thought and feeling is fitly awakened by these scenes in the life of David. We cannot think of him as if he were one of the fallen angels—a junior brother of Satan or of Moloch. He was one of our own fallen race, a brother to our very selves. If he had passions tempting him into awful sin, so have we. If he could so far forget his manhood, his piety, his obligations to his Infinite Benefactor, his relations to the noble warriors in the field and to their virtuous wives at home, as to fall into these most grievous sins, so, alas, may we! This fearful record lies against our own fallen nature. If we, personally, have been kept from sins so great and aggravated, let us rather honor the grace that has saved than plume ourselves on the assumption of better self-control and purer virtue. We have, then, a real though sad interest in the most tragic and painful scenes of human sinning. It were well if this interest shall move us to such a study of David's case as will be morally wholesome. It stands on the Scripture record for the sake of its great moral lessons. H. C.

1. The Ammonites, although beaten, having retired to their fortified towns, held out with much obstinacy. The next campaign against them was conducted by Joab, who, after ravaging the country, laid siege to the metropolitan city of Rabbah. It was while the army was engaged in these distant operations that David fell into those deep sins which have left a dark blot upon his name, that all his tears have not been able to expunge from the view of man, nor all his griefs to make man forget. *Kit.*

It is, perhaps, not without bitter emphasis that the narrative introduces it by telling us that, "at the time when kings go forth to battle," David contented himself with sending his troops against Ammon, and "tarried still at Jerusalem." At all events, the story brings into sharp contrast the levy *en masse*, encamped round Rabbah, and their natural head, who had once been so ready to take his share of blows and privations, loitering behind, taking his quiet

siesta in the hot hours after noon, as if there had been no soldiers of his sweltering in their armor, and rising from his bed to stroll on his palace roof, and peer into the household privacies below, as if his heart had no interest in the grim tussle going on behind the hills that he could almost see from his height, as they grew purple in the evening twilight. He has fallen to the level of an Eastern despot, and has lost his sense of the responsibilities of his office. Such loosening of the tension of his moral nature as is indicated in his absence from the field, during what was evidently a very severe as well as long struggle, prepared the way for the dismal headlong plunge into sin. A. M.

How rare and fearless an outspokenness marks the language in which the sins of God's saints are recorded in that Book which is eminently a Scripture of truth, a Word of God. Reasons enough there were, and those bearing on the highest interests of our souls, why these should not be passed over. Thus what a proof do they furnish of the fatal readiness with which we, set as we are to keep this city of "Mansoul" against all forces of our spiritual enemy, too often shamefully betray our trust; or, if we do not advance so far as this, remit that watchfulness all round, that habitual circumspection of our spirits which we were set to maintain. It needs but a few easy triumphs over sins which do not mightily solicit us, a few ordinary temptations overcome, and we count that all is won, that we may now dwell securely, none making us afraid. What a commentary on such a vain confidence as this does this history supply, both in what it tells and also in what it does not tell. It is thus that the story of David's fall begins: "And it came to pass, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David"—did what? Is it, led forth the Lord's host? Alas! no; nothing of the kind; but what, then? that he sent Joab with others on this war-like errand; but "David himself tarried still at Jerusalem." If the king had been sharing the hard couch of earth in the open fields with Joab and Uriah and the rest before the walls of Rabbah, it is little likely that we should have ever heard of his sin. One page of his history, a page now so blurred and so blotted, would be looked for in vain. *Trench.*

2-4. Never was there a case which showed more emphatically the dreadful chain of guilt to which a first act, apparently insignificant, may give rise. His first sin was allowing himself to be arrested to sinful intents by the beauty of Bathsheba. Had he, like Job, made a covenant with his eyes; had he resolved that when the idea of sin sought entrance into the imagination

it should be sternly refused admission; had he, in a word, nipped the temptation in the bud, he would have been saved a world of agony and sin. But instead of repelling the idea he cherishes it. He makes inquiry concerning the woman. He brings her to his house. He uses his royal position and influence to break down the objections which she would have raised. He forgets what is due to the faithful soldier who, employed in his service, is unable to guard the purity of his home. He forgets the solemn testimony of the law, which denounces death to both parties as the penalty of the sin. This is the first act of the tragedy. W. G. B.

The aggravations of the sin. He was now in years, fifty at least, when those lusts should not have been violent in him. He had many wives and concubines of his own; this is insisted on (ch. 12 : 8). Uriah, whom he wronged, was one of his own worthies; a person of honor and virtue, one that was now abroad in his service, jeopardizing his life in the high places of the field, for the honor and safety of him and his kingdom, where he himself should have been. Bathsheba was of good reputation till she was drawn by him and his influence into this wickedness; nor perhaps could any one in the world but David have prevailed against her. The adulterer not only wrongs and ruins his own soul, but, as much as he can, another's soul too. David was a king whom God hath intrusted with the sword of justice and the execution of the law upon other criminals, particularly upon adulterers, who were by the law to be put to death; for him therefore to be guilty of those crimes himself was to make himself a pattern, when he should have been a terror, to evil-doers. Much more might be said to aggravate the sin; and I can think but of one excuse for it, which is, that it was done but once; it was far from being his practice; it was by the surprise of a temptation that he was drawn into it. H.

With what unwillingness, with what fear, do I still look upon the miscarriage of the man after God's own heart! O holy prophet, who can promise himself always to stand, when he sees thee fallen and maimed with the fall? Who can assure himself of an immunity from the foulest sins when he sees thee offending so heinously, so bloodily? Let profane eyes behold thee as an excuse of sinning; I shall never look upon thee but through tears, as a woful spectacle of human infirmity. O God, whither do we go, if thou stay us not? Whoever, among the millions of thy servants, could find himself furnished with stronger preservatives against sin? Against whom could such a sin find less

pretence of prevailing? Oh keep thou us, that presumptuous sins prevail not over us; so only shall we be free from great offences.

10. Alas, instead of clearing thy sin, thou laborest to cloak it; and spendest those thoughts in the concealing of thy wickedness which thou shouldest rather have bestowed in preventing it. The best of God's children may not only be drenched in the ways of sin, but lie in them for the time, and perhaps sink twice to the bottom. What hypocrite could have done worse than study how to cover the face of his sin from the eyes of men, while he regarded not the sting of sin in his soul. *Bp. 'H.*

11. The consideration of the public hardships and hazards kept Uriah from lawful pleasures, yet could not keep David, though more nearly interested, from unlawful ones. Uriah's severity to himself should have shamed David for his indulgence of himself. The law was, *When the host goeth forth against the enemy, then, in a special manner, keep thyself from every wicked thing* (De. 23 : 9). Uriah outdid that law, but David violated it. *H.*

14. Uriah must be got rid of, not, however, openly, but by a cunning stratagem that shall make it seem as if his death were the result of the ordinary fortune of war. And to compass this David must take Joab into his confidence. To Joab, therefore, he writes a letter, indicating what is to be done to get rid of Uriah. Could David have descended to a lower depth? It was bad enough to compass the death of Uriah; it was mean enough to make him the bearer of the letter that gave directions for his death; but surely the climax of meanness and guilt was the writing of that letter. Surely it was a horrible sin—committed, too, by the head of the nation, who was bound not only to discountenance sin in every form, but especially to protect the families and preserve the rights of the brave men who were exposing their lives in his service. *W. G. B.*—If David had been but himself, how had he loved, how had he honored, this honest and religious zeal in his so faithful servant, whom now he cruelly seeks to reward with death! That fact which wine cannot hide, the sword shall. Is not this the man whom we lately saw so heart-smitten, for but cutting off the lap of the garment of a wicked master, that is now thus lavish of the blood of a gracious and well-deserving servant? Could it be likely that so worthy a captain could fall alone? Could David have expiated this sin with his own blood, it had been but well spent; but to cover his sin with the innocent blood of others was a crime above astonishment. *Bp. H.*

15. Uriah must die; that innocent, valiant, gallant man, who was ready to die for his prince's honor, must die by his prince's hand. David has sinned, and Bathsheba has sinned, and both against him, and therefore he must die; David determines he must. Is this he that executed judgment and justice to all his people? How can he now do so unjust a thing? See how fleshly lusts war against the soul, and what devastations they make in that war; how they blind the eyes, harden the heart, sear the conscience, and deprive men of all sense of honor and justice. *Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding, and quite loses it; he that doth it, destroys his own soul* (Prov. 6 : 32). *H.*

16, 17. In the letter which Uriah carried to Joab, David directed the general to place him at a point of danger, to provoke a sally from the town, to retire without withdrawing Uriah, and to make sure of his death in battle. Joab acted up to these orders, aware, perhaps, of the reason for them. A small body of Hebrews, led by Uriah, attacked one of the best-defended gates of Rabbah. Shooters discharged stones and arrows from the wall; soldiers rushed out of the town. A fierce fight ensued. No supports were sent to strengthen the handful of Hebrews in front of the gate. Uriah, with several of his soldiers, fell in battle; the rest of the assailants were repulsed. Their king had murdered those who fell. Vileness had triumphed, blood had been shed, and in the grave of a brave soldier the guilty king hoped all this wickedness was buried and forgotten. It was not so. There was an Avenger of blood looking on, who had seen the whole from beginning to end: "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord." *Sime.*

18-25. Joab had no principles apart from what he deemed his duty to the king and the people, and was quite as ready to serve his master's vices as his virtues, so long as they did not interfere with his own interests, or tended to promote them by enabling him to make himself useful to the king. His ready apprehension of the king's meaning in the matter of Uriah, and the facility with which he made himself the instrument of the murder, and of the hypocrisy by which it was covered, are proofs of this, and form as deep a stain upon his character as his own murders. *Kit.*

Let not Joab be displeased, for David is not; he blames not his conduct, nor thinks they did ill in approaching so near the wall; all is well, now that Uriah is got out of the way. This point being gained, he can make light of the

loss, and turn it off easily with an excuse, *The sword devours one as well as another*; it was a chance of war—nothing more common. He orders Joab to make the battle more strong next time, while he, by his sin, was weakening it, and provoking God to blast the undertaking.

26, 27. He married the widow in a little time. She submitted to the ceremony of mourning for her husband as little a time as custom would admit, and then David took her to his house as his wife and she bare him a son. The birth of the child so soon after the marriage published the crime; sin will have shame; yet that was not the worst of it, *The thing that David had done displeased the Lord*; the whole matter of *Uriah* (as it is called, 1 K. 15 : 5), the adultery, falsehood, murder, and this marriage, at last—it was all displeasing to the Lord. He had pleased himself, but displeased God. God sees and hates sin in his own people. Nay, the nearer any are to God in profession, the more displeasing to him their sins are, for in them there is more ingratitude, treachery, and reproach, than in the sins of others. H.

If the composition of the Bible had been in human hands it would never have contained such a chapter as this. There is something quite remarkable in the fearless way in which it unveils the guilt of David; it is set forth in its nakedness, without the slightest attempt either to palliate or to excuse it; and the only statement in the whole record designed to characterize it is the quiet but terrible words with which the chapter ends—"But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

And now we begin to understand why this supremely horrible transaction should be given in the Bible, and given at such length. It bears the character of a beacon, warning the mariner against some of the most deceitful and perilous rocks that are to be found in all the sea of life. First of all, it shows the danger of interrupting, however briefly, the duty of watching and praying, lest you enter into temptation. It is at your peril to discontinue earnest daily communion with God, especially when the evils are removed that first drove you to seek His aid. Further, it affords a sad proof of the danger of dallying with sin even in thought. Admit sin within the precincts of the imagination, and there is the utmost danger of its ultimately mastering the soul. The outposts of the spiritual garrison should be so placed as to protect even the thoughts, and the moment the enemy is discovered there the alarm should be given and the

fight begun. It is a serious moment when the young man admits a polluted thought to his heart, and pursues it even in reverie. The door is opened to a dangerous brood. And everything that excites sensual feeling, be it songs, jests, pictures, books of a lascivious character, all tends to enslave and pollute the soul, till at length it is saturated with impurity, and cannot escape the wretched thralldom. And, further, this narrative shows us what moral havoc and ruin may be wrought by the toleration and gratification of a single sinful desire. W. G. B.

Had David been enduring hardship with the armies of Israel, these temptations to luxury and uncleanness would probably never have come near him; certainly he would not have succumbed beneath them. The first lesson from the story is that prosperous times are perilous times. Then, notice the way in which sins are linked to one another, in which, as by a terrible necessity, one leads on to a second, and a second to a third, and so on. The great enemy of souls is in nothing more skilful than in breaking down the bridges of retreat behind the sinner. Wrong may become worse wrong, but it never becomes right. Close walking with God is the only safe walking. Further, do not miss this lesson—the ignoble servitude to men in which the sinner is very often through his sin entangled. Mark how David becomes the servant of Joab from the moment that he has made Joab the partaker of his evil counsels, the accomplice of his crime. Let no man in this sense be thy master. Let no man know that of thee which, if he chose to reveal it, would cast thee down from the fair esteem and reputation which thou enjoyest before men. *Trench.*

The carnal appetite, with its lusts, is very deceitful; a party within holding correspondence with our spiritual enemies, the evil angels so active and assiduous in conspiring and accomplishing the damnation of men. The devil, in Scripture, is called *the tempter* by way of eminence, who manages and improves temptations; and his pernicious design is by the objects of sense, ordered and made more alluring and killing by his various arts, to engage the affections into a compliance and so to gain the will. Now our great danger is not so much from Satan, the enemy without, as from the carnal appetite, the traitor within, that gives him the first and easy entrance into the soul. He can only entice by representing what is amiable to sense; but the corrupt appetite inclines to the closing with it. We might preserve our innocence inviolable notwithstanding all his attempts, did not some cherished corrupt affection lay us open to his

poisoned darts. The Apostle Peter, who discerned wherein the strength of our great enemy lies, admonishes Christians : “ I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul.” And we are told by him that “ the corruption that is in the world is through lust.” The outward objects are useful and beneficial in their kind ; the abuse of them is from lust. It is therefore infinitely dangerous to consult or trust our carnal faculties in this matter, for they are bribed and corrupted and will commend temporal things to our choice. The sensual affections are so numerous and clamorous, so vehement and hasty, that if they are admitted to counsel and give the decisive vote, the voice of conscience will not be heard or regarded. *Bates.*—There can be no safety to that soul where the senses are let loose. He can never keep his covenant with God that makes not a covenant with his eyes. It is an idle presumption to think the outward man may be free while the inward is safe. He is more than a man, whose heart is not led by his eyes ; he is no regenerate man, whose eyes are not restrained by his heart. *Bp. H.*

We only add, what vigilance and prayer are necessary against the sudden violent surprises of temptation ! These may come with as little warning almost as the dreadful accidents that befall men’s persons. A sudden flash of infernal fire kindles the passions and prostrates the judgment and conscience. Divine aid *can* come as suddenly as these assaults. Think solemnly of the frightful extent of the possibilities

of falling into sin, and that it is an insult to God to calculate on escaping without the means he has enjoined. “ Watch and pray.” These must be combined ; for watching without prayer were but an impious homage to ourselves. Prayer without watching were but an impious and also absurd homage to God. And what emphatic importance there is in the point of being saved from *entering* into temptation ; since, when a man is fully in it and under the strength of its influence, there is an end of watching and an utter indisposition to pray ! *Foster.*

It has appeared a difficulty to some, that persons raised up, aided, inspired, directed, or assisted by God, should have been guilty of such crimes as David, such idolatries as Solomon, such weaknesses as Samson, such apostasies as the Jewish nation in general. To this it may be answered, that it is perfectly credible that they should be raised up for particular purposes ; aided in effecting a particular object ; inspired with a certain degree of knowledge ; assisted at particular periods, and in a special manner ; and yet that, beyond this, their natural character, their external temptations, their acquired habits, may have produced all the irregularities and crimes which gave so much offence. To ask why God did not prevent this, is to ask why he did not exercise a greater degree of supernatural control than the peculiar purposes of Providence required—a question as absurd as it is presumptuous. *Dr. Graves.*

Section 268.

NATHAN’S PARABLE AND MESSAGE FROM GOD TO DAVID. DAVID’S REPENTANCE. SICKNESS AND DEATH OF BATHSHEBA’S CHILD.

2 SAMUEL 12 : 1-25.

12 1 AND the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him,
2 There were two men in one city ; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds : but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was
4 unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him,
5 but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man ; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the
6 man that hath done this is worthy to die : and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I
 8 anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul ; and I gave thee
 thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel
 and of Judah ; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such
 9 things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the LORD, to do that which is evil in his
 sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy
 10 wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore, the
 sword shall never depart from thine house ; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken
 11 the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up
 evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give
 12 them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou
 13 didst it secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David
 said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, the LORD
 14 also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast
 given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto
 15 thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto his house.

And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.
 16 David therefore besought God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all
 17 night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, *and stood* beside him, to raise
 18 him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came
 to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him
 that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto
 him, and he hearkened not unto our voice : how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that
 19 the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered together, David per-
 ceived that the child was dead : and David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And
 20 they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself,
 and changed his apparel ; and he came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped : then he
 came to his own house ; and when he required they set bread before him, and he did eat.
 21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and
 weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat
 22 bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who know-
 23 eth whether the LORD will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is
 dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall
 24 not return to me. And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay
 25 with her : and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him ;
 and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, for the
 LORD's sake.

In the very culmination of David's prosperity, at the very crowning point of his great work for Israel, and when he had sung his brightest, sweetest, most trustful songs, came that fierce outbreak of his passionate nature, for the time—and a long time—overriding and benumbing all that was spiritual and devout in him. Like Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and Peter, David sinned at the very point of his peculiar excellence. As it was the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the intrepidity of Elijah, and the courage of Peter, so it was David's purity and kindness of heart that failed. At length he "sorrowed toward God," and was forgiven ; but troubles and afflictions in his family, and sore judgments among his people, were the tokens of God's rebuke, and kept his "sin ever before" him. His harp was strung to new measures of sadness, in which grief for transgression is

blended with fervent aspiration after the purity and peace of God. And in these later Psalms, by showing that there is forgiveness, and that in God is our strength, he has helped many a sinning soul, while warning the faithful and pure against the force of sudden temptation in an unguarded hour. B.

A year had passed since David's fall. The child of sin had been born. And all this time God was silent ! Yet all the time there hung over him this Divine sentence : "But the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of Jehovah." A. E.—It was about a year that David lay under the guilt of that sin, and for aught that appears, unrepented of. And then David did not send for Nathan (though he had never had so much occasion as he had now for

his confessor), but God sent Nathan to David. H.—Alas, what long and dead sleeps may the holiest soul take in fearful sins! Were it not for thy mercy, O God, the best of us should end our spiritual lethargy in sleep of death. *Bp. H.*

1-7. Detestable as was the double guilt of this dark story, we must still remember that David was not an Alfred or a Saint Louis. He was an Eastern king, exposed to all the temptations of a king of Ammon or Damascus then, of a Sultan of Bagdad or Constantinople in modern times. What follows, however, could have been found nowhere in the ancient world but in the Jewish monarchy. A year had passed; the child of guilt was born in the royal house, and loved with all the passionate tenderness of David's paternal heart. Suddenly the prophet Nathan appears before him. He comes as if to claim redress for a wrong in humble life. It was the true prophetic spirit that spoke through Nathan's mouth. The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb has, besides its own intrinsic tenderness, a supernatural elevation, which is the best sign of true Revelation. It ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin,—not its sensuality, or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfishness. It rouses the king's conscience by that teaching described as specially characteristic of prophecy, making manifest his own sin in the indignation which he has expressed at the sin of another. *Thou art the man* is, or ought to be, the conclusion, expressed or unexpressed, of every practical sermon. *Stanley.*

He puts his parable in such life-like form that the king has no suspicion of its real character. The rich robber that spared his own flocks and herds to feed the traveller, and stole the poor man's ewe lamb, is a real flesh-and-blood criminal to him. And the deed is so dastardly, its heartlessness is so atrocious, that it is not enough to enforce against such a wretch the ordinary law of fourfold restitution; in the exercise of his high prerogative the king pronounces a sentence of death upon the ruffian, and confirms it with the solemnity of an oath—"The man that hath done this thing shall surely die." The flash of indignation is yet in his eye, the flush of resentment is still on his brow, when the prophet, with calm voice and piercing eye, utters the solemn words, "Thou art the man!" Thou, great king of Israel, art the robber, the ruffian, condemned by thine own voice to the death of the worst malefactor! *W. G. B.*

7-9. The answer of Nathan is a perfect ex-

ample of the Divine way of convincing of sin. There is first the plain charge pressed home on the individual conscience, "Thou art the man." Then follows, not reproach or further deepening of the blackness of the deed, but a tender enumeration of God's great benefits, whereon is built the solemn question, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight?" The contemplation of God's faithful love, and of the all-sufficient gifts which it bestows, makes every transgression irrational as well as ungrateful, and turns remorse, which consumes like the hot wind of the wilderness, into tearful repentance which refreshes the soul. *A. M.*

9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord.

Great as was David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba, his sin against God was greater in thus breaking two express commandments of the Decalogue. **And hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.** This is not a mere repetition of the clause "thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword." The verb is stronger, "thou hast murdered;" and the offence is shown to have been aggravated by the employment of the Ammonites, the enemies of God's people, as the instruments for its commission. *A. F. K.*—He charges him with a high contempt of the Divine authority, in the sins he had been guilty of. *Wherefore hast thou* (presuming upon thy royal dignity and power) *despised the commandment of the Lord?* This is the spring, and this the malignity of sin, that it is making light of the Divine law and the Lawmaker; as if the obligation of it were weak, the precepts of it trifling, and the threats not at all formidable. David *despised the word of the Lord*, so it is in the Hebrew, the particular word of promise, which God had, by Nathan, sent to him some time before, that he would build him a house: which sacred promise, if he had had a due value and veneration for, he would not thus have polluted his house with lust and blood. *H.*

10, 11. Here we find a great principle in the moral government of God,—correspondence between an offence and its retribution. Of this many instances occur in the Old Testament. Jacob deceived his father; he was deceived by his own sons. Lot made a worldly choice; in the world's ruin he was overwhelmed. So David having slain Uriah with his sword, the sword was never to depart from him. He had robbed Uriah of his wife; his neighbors would in like manner rob and dishonor him. He had disturbed the purity of the family relation; his

own house was to become a den of pollution. He had mingled deceit and treachery with his actions ; deceit and treachery would be practised toward him. What a sad and ominous prospect ! For him there was to be no calm in the evening of his life. His trial was to fall on the tenderest part of his nature. He had a strong affection for his children ; in that very feeling he was to be wounded, and that, too, all his life long. W. G. B.—The sentence pronounced upon him—"Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house," furnishes the key to David's future history and career, which was as unprosperous and troubled, as the earlier part of his reign had been happy and successful. There was in all things a great change—even in the man himself. Broken in spirit by the consciousness of how deeply he had sinned against God and against man ; humbled in the eyes of his subjects, and his influence with them weakened by the knowledge of his crimes ; and even his authority in his own household, and his claim to the reverence of his sons, relaxed by his loss of character—David appears henceforth as a much altered man. *Kit.*

12. The sin was secret and industriously concealed, but the punishment should be open and industriously proclaimed, to the shame of David, whose sin in the matter of Uriah would then be called to mind and commonly talked of. As face answers to face in a glass, so does the punishment often answer to the sin ; here is *blood for blood, and uncleanness for uncleanness*. And thus God would show how much he hates sin, even in his own people, and that wherever he finds it he will not let it go unpunished. *H.*

13. David cannot have the heart or the face to stand out against the message of God ; but now, as a man confounded and condemned in himself, he cries out, in the bitterness of a wounded soul, **I have sinned against the Lord.** It was a short word, but passionate ; and such as came from the bottom of a contrite heart. *Bp H.*

The prophet Nathan came to tell him in clear words that which he had been hearing in muttered accents within his heart for months before. He came to tell him that the God of righteousness and mercy, who cared for Uriah, the poor man with the single ewe-lamb, was calling him, the king, to account for an act of unrighteousness and unmercifulness. Nathan brought him to face steadily the light at which he had been winking, and to own that the light was good and the darkness only was horrible and hateful ; so that he might turn to the light, and crave that it should once more penetrate

into the depths of his being and take possession of him. And this was his confession and prayer. He makes out no case for himself ; he pleads no extenuating circumstances. *Maurice.*—"I have sinned against the Lord." Two words (in the Hebrew) make the transition from sullen misery to real though shaded peace. No lengthened outpouring, no accumulation of self reproach ; he is too deeply moved for many words, which he knows God does not need. More would have been less. All is contained in that one sob, in which the whole frostwork of these weary months breaks up and rolls away, swept before the strong flood. *A. M.*

The instant recognition of his guilt breaks up the illusion of months. "I have sinned *against the Lord.*" The sense of his injustice to man waxes faint before his sense of sin against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." *Stanley.*—The strength of David's confession lay in the three words "against the Lord." Any one can say, "I have sinned," but one must have known God, must have realized what sin is to God, and must have felt something of what God is to the soul before one can say, "I have sinned *against the Lord.*" *Vaughan.*—Who has not read that fifty-first Psalm, in which David does solemn penance in presence of all the people, and in which he utters, on account of his sin, a cry of anguish which still re-echoes throughout all ages ? Ah ! far from veiling itself in this transaction, the holiness of God shines forth brilliantly, so brilliantly that David himself humbly acknowledges it in the very hour when it strikes him most rigorously, by exclaiming, "That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest ;" that is, when Thou reproachest me ; "and be clear when Thou judgest." *Godet.*

In Ps. 51 we hear David crying out for mercy in the bitterness of his pangs. He seems to lose sight of everything else but God. His sins are seen as if committed against God only. Oh, can he ever be forgiven ? And if forgiven, can he hope to be so washed and cleansed and lifted above temptation's power that he shall never fall again ? These are the words of his prayer. Never were fitter words poured forth from a penitent soul. *H. C.*—In these words the humiliation of the Psalmist before God is very profound, very thorough. His case is one for simple mercy ; he has not the shadow of a plea in self-defence. His sin is in every aspect atrocious. It is the product of one so vile that he may be said to have been shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. The aspect of it as sin against God is so overwhelming that it absorbs

the other aspect—the sin against man. Not but that he has sinned against man, too ; but it is the sin against God that is so awful, so overwhelming. Yet, if his sin abounds, the Psalmist feels that God's grace abounds much more. He has the highest sense of the excellence and the multitude of God's loving-kindnesses. Man can never make himself so odious as to be beyond the Divine compassion. He can never become so guilty as to be beyond the Divine forgiveness. "Blot out my transgressions," sobs David, knowing that it can be done. "Purge me with hyssop," he cries, "and I *shall* be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." But this is not all ; it is far from all. He pleads most plaintively for the restoration of God's friendship. "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me,"—for that would be hell ; "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit,"—for that is heaven. And, with the renewed sense of God's love and grace, there would come a renewed power to serve God and be useful to men. "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. O Lord, open Thou my lips ; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise." Deprive me not forever of Thy friendship, for then life would be but darkness and anguish ; depose me not forever from Thy ministry, continue to me yet the honor and the privilege of converting sinners unto Thee. Of the sacrifices of the law it was needless to think, as if they were adequate to purge away so overwhelming a sin. "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else I would give it : Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." With all his consciousness of sin, David has yet a profound faith in God's mercy, and he is forgiven. W. G. B.

And as brief and simple as the confession, is the response, **And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin.** How full and unconditional the blessing bestowed in these few words ; how swift and sufficient the answer ! So the long estrangement is ended. Thus simple and divine is the manner of pardon. In such short compass may the turning-point of a life lie ! But while confession and forgiveness heal the breach between God and David, pardon is not impunity, and the same sentence which bestows the remission of sin announces the exaction of a penalty. A. M. —We learn from the case of

David, that God can punish, and that he can forgive, at the same time. Punishment from him, when it falls upon good men, is not the punishment of wrath and vengeance, but that of love and correction : it is therefore a sign that he forgives, and it ought to be so understood. When Nathan said to David, "The sword shall never depart from thy house ;" he said at the same time, "The Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die." God, therefore, forgives while he punishes, and punishes because he forgives. *Jones of N.*—Pardon may well stand with temporal afflictions. Where God hath forgiven, though he doth not punish, yet he may chastise, and that unto blood ; neither doth he always forbear correction, where he remits revenge. So long as he smites us not as an angry judge, we may endure to smart from him as a loving father. *Bp. H.*

There is yet another Psalm which manifestly pertains to David's experience in this great sin, viz., Ps. 32. It seems to have been written a little later than Ps. 51, and yet to record in part his earlier experience. *H. C.*—What untold agonies he suffered while he covered up his sin, he himself has told us in the thirty-second Psalm. In general, we have in this respect also in the Psalter a faithful record for the guidance of penitents in all ages—to preserve them from despair, to lead them to true repentance, and to bring them at last into the sunlight of forgiveness and peace. Throughout one element appears very prominently, and is itself an indication of "godly sorrow." Besides his own guilt the penitent also feels most keenly the dishonor which he has brought on God's name, and the consequent triumph of God's enemies. Placing these Psalms, so to speak, in the chronological order of David's experience, we would arrange them as follows : Ps. 38, 6, 51, and 32—when at last it is felt that all "transgression is forgiven," all "sin covered." A. E.

14. Howbeit. While he who has fully confessed is fully forgiven, there is still, as concerns this present life, a sad "howbeit" behind. God had taken from him the eternal penalty of his sin ; but He had never said, Thy sin shall not be bitter to thee. God may forgive His children their sin, and yet He may make their sin most bitter to them here, teaching them in this way its evil, which they might else have been in danger of forgetting, the aggravation which there is in the sins of a child, in sins against light, against knowledge, against love. *Trench.*—**Because thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.** This is an aggrava-

tion of guilt which only God's children can commit. And it is an aggravation of a most distressing kind, enough surely to warn off every Christian from vile self-indulgence. The blasphemy to which David had given occasion was that which denies the reality of God's work in the souls of His people. It denies that they are better than others. They only make more pretence, but that pretence is hollow, if not hypocritical. There is no such thing as a special work of the Holy Ghost in them, and therefore there is no reason why any one should seek to be converted, or why he should implore the special grace of the Spirit of God. Alas, how true it is that when any one who occupies a conspicuous place in the Church of God breaks down, such sneers are sure to be discharged on every side! W. G. B.

That the man after God's own heart should have so fallen from his high estate as to become the adulterer and the assassin, has been ever urged with great effect by unbelievers; and this very consequence of David's sin was foreseen and foretold by Nathan the prophet, when he approached the king, bearing with him the rebuke of God on his tongue, and saying, "By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme." Such has indeed been its effect from the day when it was first done unto this day, and such probably will its effect continue to be unto the end of time. That the sin of David was great and grievous, the Almighty proclaimed even more loudly perhaps by suffering David to live, than if in the sudden burst of his instant displeasure he had slain him. For with this sin the sorrow of his life began, and the *curse* which the prophet denounced against him sat heavy on his spirit to the last; a curse which has a peculiar reference to the nature of his crime; as though upon this offence all his future miseries and misfortunes were to turn; as though he was only spared from the avenger's violent hand to be made a spectacle of righteous suffering to the world. He had committed murder by the edge of the sword, and therefore the sword was never to depart from his house. He had despised the commandment of the Lord (so Nathan expressly says), and taken the wife of another to be his wife; therefore were his own wives to be taken from him, and given to his neighbor in turn. The *complexion*, therefore, of his remaining years was set by this one fatal deed of darkness (let none think or say that it was lightly regarded by the Almighty), and having become the man of blood, of blood he was to drink deep; and having become the man of lust, by that same bane-

ful passion in others was he himself to be scourged forever. Now the manner in which these tremendous threats are fulfilled is very remarkable; for it is done by way of *natural consequence* of the sin itself. And now can any say that God winked at this wickedness of his servant? That the man after his own heart, for such in the main he was, frail as he proved himself, sinned grievously, and sinned with impunity! On the contrary, this deed was the pivot upon which David's fortunes turned; that done, and he was undone; then did God raise up enemies against him for it out of his own house, for "the thing," as we are expressly told, "displeased the Lord;" thenceforward the days of his years became full of evil. *Blunt.*

22, 23. The death of the child showed that it was not God's will to grant his petition, notwithstanding his deep repentance and earnest prayer and fasting. All suspense was now at an end, and, therefore, all reason for continuing to fast and pray. For David to abandon himself to the wailings of aggravated grief at this moment would have been to quarrel with the will of God. It would have been to challenge God's right to view the child as one with its father, and treat it accordingly. And there was yet another reason. If his heart still yearned on the child, the re-union was not impossible, though it could not take place in this life. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The glimpse of the future expressed in these words is touching and beautiful. The relation between David and that little child is not ended. Though the mortal remains shall soon crumble, father and child are not yet done with one another. But their meeting is not to be in this world. Meet again they certainly shall, for "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." And this glimpse of the future relation of parent and child, separated here by the hand of death, has ever proved most comforting to bereaved Christian hearts. Very touching and very comforting it is to light on this bright view of the future at so early a period of Old Testament history. Words cannot express the desolation of heart which such bereavements cause. When Rachel is weeping for her children she cannot be comforted if she thinks they are not. But a new light breaks on her desolate heart when she is assured that she may go to them, though they shall not return to her. W. G. B.

24, 25. And once more there came peace to David's soul. Bathsheba was now truly and before God his wife. Another child gladdened their hearts. David named him, symbolically

and prophetically, Solomon, "the peaceful;" the seal, the pledge, and the promise of peace. But God called him, and he was "Jedidiah," the Jehovah-loved. Once more, then, the sunshine of God's favor had fallen upon David's household—yet was it, now and ever afterward, the sunlight of autumn rather than that of summer; a sunlight, not of undimmed brightness, but amid clouds and storm. A. E.

The story is told without palliation or reserve, without comment or heightening, in that stern judicial fashion so characteristic of the Bible records of its greatest characters. Every step is narrated without a trace of softening, and without a word of emotion. Not a single ugly detail is spared. The portraiture is as vivid as ever. It is told because it teaches us, as no other page in the history of God's church does, how the alchemy of Divine love can extract sweet perfumes of penitence and praise out of the filth of sin; and, therefore, though we turn with loathing from David's sin, we have to bless God for the record of it, and for the lessons of hope that come from David's pardon. To many a sin-tortured soul since then, the two psalms (51 and 32), all blotted with tears, in which he has sobbed out his penitence, have been as footsteps in a great and terrible wilderness. A. M.

It is one object of Holy Scripture to paint sin in its true colors. No friendly flattery, no false modesty, draws a veil over this dark scene in David's life. It is recorded as a warning, that even holy men may yield to temptation and fall into gross sin; that one sin almost inevitably leads to others; that sin, even when repented of, brings punishment in its train. With stern simplicity the inspired prophet-historian describes how "the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). The king, who but a few years before had sung of "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. 24:4), and vowed to exclude from his palace all workers of deceit (Ps. 101:7), is dragged by his passion into meanness, ingratitude, dissimulation, treachery, murder. "These things were written for our admonition. . . . Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But if the history is a stern record of the enthralling power and the inevitable consequences of sin, it is no less a testimony to the liberating power of repentance. In the words of Bishop Hall: "How can we presume of not sinning, or despair for sinning, when we find so great a saint thus fallen, ~~and~~ risen." It is the necessary key to the his-

tory of the rest of David's reign. It explains the sudden overclouding of his life; the change from triumph and prosperity to sorrow and failure. A. F. K.

Jewish tradition declares that the sin of Israel in making the golden calf and the fall of David were only recorded—it might almost seem, that they were only allowed—for the sake of their lessons about repentance. The former showed that, even if the whole congregation had erred and strayed, the door of mercy was still open to them; the latter, that not only for Israel as a whole, but for each individual sinner, however low his fall, there was assurance of forgiveness, if with true penitence he turned to God. The one case proved that nothing was too great for God to pardon; the other that there was not any one beneath His gracious notice. Be they many, or only one solitary individual, the ear of God was equally open to the cry of the repentant. The other point to which the Rabbis call attention is, that all the trials of David's later life, and all the judgments which overtook him and his house, might be traced up to his great sin, which, though personally pardoned, made itself felt in its consequences throughout the whole of his after-history. It cannot be doubted that there is deep truth in this view. For, although David was graciously forgiven, and again received into God's favor, neither he nor his government ever wholly recovered from the moral shock of his fall. It is not merely that his further history was attended by an almost continuous succession of troubles, but that these troubles, while allowed of God in judgment, were all connected with a felt and perceptible weakness on his part, which was the consequence of his sin. If the figure may be allowed: henceforth David's hand shook, and his voice trembled; and both what he did and what he said, alike in his own household and in the land, bore evidence of it. A. E.

The fall of David is one of the most instructive and alarming recorded in that most faithful and impartial of all histories, the Holy Bible. The transgression of one idle and unguarded moment pierced him through with many sorrows, and embittered the rest of his life. The remainder of his days was as disastrous as the beginning had been prosperous. Rape, incest, murder, and rebellion, raged among his children; he was deserted by his friends, reviled by his enemies, banished from his capital, plunged into the deepest affliction by the ingratitude and death of his favorite and rebellious son Absalom; and, to fill up the measure of his calamities, had a dreadful plague brought upon

his subjects by his last offence ; so that he died, exhausted, at seventy years of age, still older in constitution than in years. *Dr. Hales.*—The death of Uriah marks the change in David's personal fortune. The avenger of blood pursues him relentlessly. Deeply does he repent of his sin, and Nathan assures him of the Divine forgiveness ; but the natural consequences of the sin are not thereby cancelled, nor is chastisement suspended. It is an awful and salutary lesson, that sin compels us to eat the bread of bitterness even though our pardon be sealed by the Word of God. The great contrast between Saul and David is to be observed in the profound and constant respect with which the latter heard and heeded the admonition of the prophets of God. The prophets were preachers of righteousness. Saul heard Samuel, and then did as he pleased. He was restless under admonition, and disobedient. David bowed his heart, and repented in dust and ashes. Here is the moral grandeur of the man which makes him a model for all time, a true servant of God, because always and promptly submissive to the Divine reproof. It is a splendid tribute which that severest and sourest of all critics, Thomas Carlyle, pays to the character of the great Hebrew king :

“ David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough,—blackest crimes ; there was no want of sins. And thereupon unbelievers sneer, and ask, ‘ Is this your man according to God's heart ? ’ The sneer seems to me but a shallow one. David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best,—struggle often baffled, sore baffled down into entire wreck, yet a struggle never ended ; ever with tears, repentance, true, unconquerable purpose begun anew. Poor human nature ! Is not a man's walking in truth always that—‘ a succession of falls ? ’ Man can do no other. In this wild element of a life he has to struggle upward, now fallen, now abased ; and ever with tears, repentance, and a bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again, still onward. That his struggle be a faithful, unconquerable one, that is the question of questions.”

Ah, the man who sneers at David does not know his own heart, nor does he dream how a fierce, hot breath might consume to ashes his own boastful superiority ! The true man will profit by David's example, and double the guard over his own conduct ; while he will be profoundly grateful that even for David was there

forgiveness with God. It is the parable of the prodigal in real life. It will send no man into the slums, but it will encourage many a man to come back or to call a halt in his course. There are scars upon your soul, perhaps ; there are secrets that haunt and curse you ; there are memories that torment you ; but, my brother, the gate of return is open, and He who pardoned David has mercy for thousands, and will make you whiter than snow, if you come to Him with a broken heart. *Behrends.*

David, in his two characters, is not one man, but two. There is no concord between David fighting for God, in the confidence of God's righteousness, and David violating the plainest laws of society for his own selfish lusts. They are not to be reconciled. It is just in this circumstance that David's righteous and evil acts are not to be harmonized, that the wholesomeness of his written story lies. We do not feel the inconsistency which unbelievers point to in David, with the sneering question, “ Is this the man after God's own heart ? ” We feel rather that were it not for these inconsistencies David would be unlike us, and his story no pattern of ours. *Ainger.*

We are obliged to admit that characters full of open faults, and even stained by manifest sins, are often more estimable than those in which the fault never comes to the surface. Peter, who denied his Master and yet really loved Him, would have been less worthy of regard if he had loved less although he never had denied. His sin was a revelation of what sin is, but not of the comparative worth of his character. So, too, the great crimes of David show that sin in the form of strong desire leads to enormous wickedness, even to so heinous a crime as murder ; while yet in the judgment of God and of man many a person would stand far below David in character, who had lived an outwardly unspotted life. *Woolsey.*—Many have sinned even more deeply than David sinned ; few, very few, have repented as deeply as did he. It is easy to sin with his passion, but how difficult to repent with his grief ! *M. J.*

Though the sins and backsliding of a believer cannot destroy his interest in Christ, yet they may so far destroy his comfort (especially if long persisted in against light and love, and of a foul nature) that, even after he is delivered from the power of them, he may for a long time go bleeding under the wounds he has received from the commission of them. The promise indeed is sure, that God will not UTTERLY “ take away his loving-kindness” from one individual of the

seed of grace ; yet the threat is no less certain, that " He will visit their iniquity with a rod, and their sin with scourges ;" not in a way of vindictive wrath, but in a way of mercy and fatherly chastisement.

As it is in temporals, so in spirituals : a strong Christian, by venturing too much on the slippery borders of temptation, may get a fearful tumble into the mire, and complain of broken bones, as David did ; but by grace he will rise again and walk more warily ; whereas spiritual declensions (at the root of which the canker-worm of worldly-mindedness usually lies concealed) eat up the very vitals of religion ; and are the more dangerous, as they advance more imperceptibly. *Hill.*

One other fact we must notice ere passing from the record of David's confession and chastisement,—the moral courage which he showed in delivering the fifty-first Psalm to the chief musician, and thus helping to keep alive in his own generation and for all time coming the memory of his trespass. Most men would have thought how the ugly transaction might most effectually be buried, and would have tried to put their best face on it before their people.

Not so David. He was willing that his people and all posterity should see him the atrocious transgressor he was—let them think of him as they pleased. He saw that this everlasting exposure of his vileness was essential toward extracting from the miserable transaction such salutary lessons as it might be capable of yielding. And the first public record of the transaction came from his own pen, and was delivered to the chief musician, for public use. Infidels may scoff, but this narrative will be a standing proof that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. The view given to God's servants of the weakness and deceitfulness of their hearts ; the warning against dallying with the first movements of sin ; the sight of the misery which follows in its wake ; the encouragement which the convicted sinner has to humble himself before God ; the impulse given to penitential feeling ; the hope of mercy awakened in the breasts of the despairing ; the softer, humbler, holier walk when pardon has been got and peace restored,—such lessons as these, afforded in every age by this narrative, will render it to thoughtful hearts a constant ground for magnifying God. W. G. B.

Section 269.

CAPTURE OF RABBAH. AMNON AND TAMAR. MURDER OF AMNON AND FLIGHT OF ABSALOM. JOAB'S STRATAGEM TO SECURE ABSALOM'S RECALL. ABSALOM'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM, AND SUBSEQUENT RESTORATION TO DAVID'S FAVOR.

2 SAMUEL 12 : 26-31 ; 13 : 1-39 ; 14 : 1-33. 1 CHRONICLES 20 : 1-3.

1 S. 12 : 26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, yea, I have taken the city of waters. Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it : lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he took the crown of their king from off his head ; and the weight thereof was a talent of gold, and *in it were* precious stones ; and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, exceeding much. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under (or to) saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through (or labor at) the brickkiln : and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

Ch. 13 : 1-39. The cruel crime of Amnon, and his assassination by Absalom's order. Absalom flees to the Syrian King Talmai, and remains in Geshur three years.

14 1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom. **2** And Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel, I pray thee, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead : and go in to the king, **4** and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. And when the

woman of Tekoa spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and
5 said, Help, O king. And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, Of a
6 truth I am a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons, and
they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the
7 other, and killed him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and
they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother
whom he slew, and so destroy the heir also : thus shall they quench my coal which is left, and
8 shall leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the face of the earth. And the
9 king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. And
the woman of Tekoa said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my
10 father's house : and the king and his throne be guiltless. And the king said, Whosoever saith
11 aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. Then said she, I
pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that the avenger of blood destroy not any
more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of
12 thy son fall to the earth. Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak a
13 word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on. And the woman said, Wherefore then
hast thou devised such a thing against the people of God? for in speaking this word the king is
14 as one which is guilty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished one. For we
must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ;
neither doth God take away life, but deviseth means, that he that is banished be not an out-
15 cast from him. Now therefore seeing that I am come to speak this word unto my lord the
king, it is because the people have made me afraid : and thy handmaid said, I will now speak
16 unto the king ; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. For the king
will hear, to deliver his servant out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son
17 together out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid said, Let, I pray thee, the word
of my lord the king be comfortable : for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern
18 good and bad : and the LORD thy God be with thee. Then the king answered and said unto
the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, aught that I shall ask thee. And the woman said,
19 Let my lord the king now speak. And the king said, Is the hand of Joab with thee in all this?
And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the
right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken : for thy servant Joab,
20 he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid : to change the face of
the matter hath thy servant Joab done this thing : and my lord is wise, according to the wis-
21 dom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth. And the king said unto
Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing : go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.
22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and did obeisance, and blessed the king : and Joab
said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in
23 that the king hath performed the request of his servant. So Joab arose and went to Geshur,
24 and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, but
let him not see my face. So Absalom turned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.
25 Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty : from the
26 sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he
polled his head, (now it was at every year's end that he polled it : because *the hair* was heavy
on him, therefore he polled it :) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after
27 the king's weight. And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose
name was Tamar : she was a woman of a fair countenance.
28 And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem ; and he saw not the king's face.
29 Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king ; but he would not come to him : and he
30 sent again a second time, but he would not come. Therefore he said unto his servants, See,
Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there ; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's ser-
31 vants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said
32 unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? And Absalom answered Joab,
Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Where-
fore am I come from Geshur? it were better for me to be there still : now therefore let me
33 see the king's face ; and if there be iniquity in me, let him kill me. So Joab came to the
king, and told him : and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed
himself on his face to the ground before the king ; and the king kissed Absalom.

12 : 26-31. It is often the method of the writers of Scripture, when the stream of public history has been broken by a private or personal incident, to complete at once the incident, and then go back to the principal history, resuming it at the point at which it was interrupted. In this way it sometimes happens that earlier events are recorded at a later part of the narrative than the natural order would imply. In the course of the narrative of David's war with Ammon, the incident of his sin with Bathsheba presents itself. In accordance with the method referred to, that incident is recorded straight on to its very close, including the birth of Bathsheba's second son (verses 24, 25—see previous section), which must have occurred at least two years later. That being concluded, the history of the war with Ammon is resumed at the point at which it was broken off. We are not to suppose, as many have done, that the events recorded in these concluding verses of this chapter happened later than those recorded immediately before. This would imply that the siege of Rabbah lasted for two or three years—a supposition hardly to be entertained.

The order of events is probably as follows : After the death of Uriah, Joab prepares for an assault on Rabbah. Meanwhile, at Jerusalem, Bathsheba goes through the form of mourning for her husband, and when the usual days of mourning are over David hastily sends for her and makes her his wife. Next comes a message from Joab that he has succeeded in taking the city of waters, and that only the citadel remains to be taken, for which purpose he urges David to come himself with additional forces, and thereby gain the honor of conquering the place. It rather surprises one to find Joab declining an honor for himself, as it also surprises us to find David going to reap what another had sowed. David, however, goes with "all the people," and is successful, and after disposing of the Ammonites he returns to Jerusalem. Soon after Bathsheba's child is born ; then Nathan goes to David and gives him the message that lays him in the dust. This is not only the most natural order for the events, but it agrees best with the spirit of the narrative. W. G. B.

26. And Joab fought against Rabbah. The narrative returns to the point at which it was left in ch. 11 : 1. But how long a time was occupied in the siege does not appear. It is possible that it lasted more than one year, and did not come to an end till after the birth of Bathsheba's first child. But, on the other hand, it would be quite natural for the historian, having once commenced his account of Bath-

sheba, to complete it before narrating the capture of Rabbah, so that this may have been effected within a year. *Rabbah* (the great city), or more fully *Rabbah of the children of Ammon*, the capital of the Ammonites, was situated in a strong position about twenty-two miles east of the Jordan, on a branch of the valley of the Jab-bok. It consisted of the lower town, called "the city of waters" (verse 27), from the perennial stream which has its source in it ; and the citadel, a place of great strength, built on a hill rising abruptly on the north side of the lower town. We are not told whether the city was destroyed on its capture. If so, it was afterward rebuilt, and was a place of importance at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. A. F. K.

27. City of Waters. This expression of Joab, and the fact of the citadel requiring a separate siege, are at once understood on the spot. Ammân stands on the confluence of two little streams, which unite in the centre of the place, the two valleys converging into one, and enclosing between them a bold, flat triangle of rock, the ancient citadel. This is of itself a large city of several acres. H. B. T.—"The royal city" seems to be equivalent to "the city of waters"—that is, the lower city on the river, as distinguished from "the city" (verse 28)—i.e., the citadel. The capture of this probably deprived the citadel of its water-supply, and so rendered it untenable for any length of time.

31. These cruel punishments must be judged according to the standard of the age in which they were inflicted, not by the light of Christian civilization. The Ammonites were evidently a savage and brutal nation, and in all probability they were treated no worse than they were accustomed to treat others. It was the age of retaliation, when the law of like for like—the *lex talionis*—prevailed. They had foully insulted David, and it is not to be wondered at if he was provoked into making a signal example of them by this severity. In this respect he did not rise above the level of his own age. A. F. K.—Although the fact is not stated (as it is only incidentally done in the case of Adonizedek) that the present severity was retributive, the certainty that it was so is sufficiently indicated by sundry dispersed facts, which bring out the peculiarly savage character of this people. Look, for instance, at their refusal of any other terms than the loss of their right eyes, to the men of Jabesh Gilead, who were inclined to surrender without resistance. This is quite of a piece with their treatment of David's ambassadors ; and the character thus manifested they still show in a later age, when they are reproached by the

prophet for deliberate and excessive cruelty (Amos 1 : 13). To an enemy of this description, it could not have appeared unjust to treat them according to their dealings with others. Severe that treatment was, no doubt, and was meant to be ; but to call it more than this is to confound the modern with the ancient law of nations, or with the law of nature itself. *Kil.*

While some think the surviving citizens were sent into the royal forests as hewers of timber or cutters in the saw-pits, or became brickmakers for the king, others believe they were cruelly torn with saws or axes, and even burned to death. But the history of the following years does not square with this alleged cruelty. Many of the people appear to have been left in the town under the rule of Shobi, a son of Nahash, and a friend of David. That prince had held aloof from the court of Ammon when it encouraged Hanun to insult David's men. He and his adherents were rewarded for this friendship when the rest of their countrymen had been punished for the crime. Among the Ammonite captives was an infant girl named "Naamah," or "Delight." She may have belonged to the royal family and been received into David's palace on the overthrow of her kindred. Many years afterward she became the wife of Solomon. *Sime.*

In the whole transaction at Rabbah David shows poorly. It is not like him to be roused to an enterprise by an appeal to his love of fame. It is not like him to go through the ceremony of being crowned with the crown of the king of Ammon, as if it were a great thing to have so precious a diadem on his head. Above all, it is not like him to show so harsh a spirit in disposing of his prisoners of war. But all this is quite likely to have happened if he had not yet come to repentance for his sin. When a man's conscience is ill at ease, he is in the temper that most easily becomes savage when provoked. No one can imagine that David's conscience was at rest. *W. G. B.*

Amnon and Tamar.

13 : 1-22.

Before his marriage with Bathsheba, David had sixteen sons, who lived as princes among the people, each in his own house. Only three of them are of any note in history : the eldest, Amnon, son of Ahinoam of Jezreel ; the third, Absalom, son of Maacah of Geshur : and the fourth, Adonijah, son of Haggith. For the precedence due to Amnon as the first-born he was likely to have a formidable rival in Absalom, whose mother was a king's daughter, and who

was himself unequalled for beauty among the people. But we do not hear of any jealousy or dissension among the king's sons till the event here narrated led to fatal results. *P. S.*

We do not find that David's children imitated him in his devotion ; but his false steps they trod in, and in those did much worse, and repented not. Parents know not how fatal the consequences may be, if, in any instance, they give their children bad examples. *H.*—Where the father of the family brings sin home to the house, it is not easily swept out. Unlawful lust propagates itself by example. How justly is David scourged by the sins of his sons whom his act taught to offend ! *Bp. H.*

1. Beauty is a snare to many ; it was so to Tamar ; she was fair, and therefore Amnon coveted her. They that are peculiarly handsome have no reason on that account to be proud, but great reason to stand upon their watch. *H.*—

3. Perhaps this unkindly flame might in time have gone out alone, had there not been a Jonadab to blow these coals with ill counsel. Had he been a true friend, he had bent all the forces of his dissuasion against the wicked motions of that sinful lust, and had showed the prince of Israel how much those desires provoked God and blemished himself, and had lent his hand to strangle them in their first conception. *Bp. H.*

12. No such thing ought to be done in Israel. Israel was a holy nation, sanctified by the peculiar presence of Jehovah among them ; and therefore all acts of unchastity were an offence against the true character and calling of the nation. Such acts might be common among heathen nations, but to Israel they were forbidden by the Law, which placed them on a loftier level of morality.

13. As one of the fools in Israel. "Fool" denotes not merely one who is stupid and ignorant, but one who has abandoned the fear of God, and cast off the restraints of decency and morality (cp. ch. 3 : 33 ; Ps. 14 : 1). "Folly" is a term specially applied to unchastity. *A. F. K.*

15-17. Amnon appears with no redeeming features in his character. That his love of Tamar turned so suddenly and so meanly to hate—what shall we say of it less than to call it unutterable vileness ! But ungoverned lust will naturally dislodge and expel from human souls all that is noble, and leave scope only for what is ineffably base and mean. This hatred in Amnon's soul suggests that worst law of sinning natures, which in a sort compels the sinner to hate whom he harms, and to hate most those he has most cruelly wronged. Incidentally

these events were among the fruits of polygamy—the children of envious and rival mothers having the same father were not wont to waste much love upon each other. H. C.—It is among the many curses of polygamy that the children of the different wives grow up from the first in an atmosphere of sensual indulgence; secondly, that there is sure to be rivalry between them, and intriguing among their mothers, with a view to their father's favor and the succession to his property. All this is abundantly illustrated in the history of David's children, especially of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. *Plummer.*

21. In spite of his anger David did not punish or even rebuke the offence, though the legal penalty of his crime was death. David's indulgent treatment of his sons was a fruitful source of mischief, and led in this case to the murder of Amnon, and ultimately to Absalom's rebellion. The consciousness of his own guilt moreover weakened his hands for dealing with Amnon's offence. A. F. K.—How could he who had himself sinned so deeply, call his son to account for his misconduct? and with what an awful retort, drawn from the example he had set to his children, might not his rebuke be met?

22. “He spoke not a word to Amnon, neither good nor bad.” Absalom “hated” him for the wrong he had done to his sister; but he was too proud to “speak good” to one who had brought this dishonor to him, and too wary to put Amnon on his guard by expressing the hatred he nourished in his heart. He intended to make his revenge effectual, and to use it for clearing his way to the throne. We cannot but think that he had already taken up the design upon the kingdom which he eventually carried out, and that as Amnon was his elder brother, and the heir-apparent, he meant to use his private wrong as the excuse for removing so serious an obstacle from his path. But to this end it was necessary that the king, as well as Amnon, should be lulled into the conviction that he had no thoughts of revenge, and that the matter had gone from his mind. *Kil.*—David is now doomed to see his children following his own evil example, only with added circumstances of atrocity. Adultery and murder had been introduced by him into the palace; when he is done with them they remain to be handled by his sons.

Amnon Murdered by Absalom.

Verses 23-29.

It is not easy to paint the blackness of the crime of Absalom. We have nothing to say for

Amnon, who seems to have been a man singularly vile; but there is something very appalling in his being murdered by the order of his brother, something very cold-blooded in Absalom's appeal to the assassins not to flinch from their task, something very revolting in the flagrant violation of the laws of hospitality, and something not less daring in the deed being done in the midst of the feast, and in the presence of the guests.

And now the first part of the retribution denounced by Nathan begins to be fulfilled, and fulfilled very fearfully,—“the sword shall never depart from thy house.” Ancient history abounds in frightful stories, stories of murder, incest, and revenge, the materials, real or fabulous, from which were formed the tragedies of the great Greek dramatists. But nothing in their dramas is more tragic than the crime of Amnon, the incest of Tamar, and the revenge of Absalom. What David's feelings must have been we can hardly conceive. What must he have felt as he thought of the death of Amnon, slain by his brother's command, in his brother's house, at his brother's table, and hurried to God's judgment while his brain was reeling with intoxication! What a pang must have been shot by the recollection how David had once tried, for his own base ends, to intoxicate Uriah as Absalom had intoxicated Amnon! How could he but be filled with anguish when he thought of his son, hurried, while drunk, by his brother's act, into the presence of God, to answer for the worse than murder of his sister, and for all the crimes and sins of an ill-spent life! W. G. B.

32, 33. Jonadab, David's nephew, could tell him, *Amnon only is dead*, and not all the king's sons, and could tell him, too, that it was done by the appointment of Absalom, and designed from the day he forced his sister Tamar. What a wicked man was he, if he knew all this or had any cause to suspect it, that he did not make David acquainted with it sooner, that means might have been used to make up the quarrel. Had he acted as an honest man, David might not have thrown Amnon into the mouth of danger by letting him go to Absalom's house. If we do not our utmost to prevent mischief we make ourselves accessory to it. *If we say, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart, consider whether we did or no?* See Prov. 24 : 11, 12. Jonadab was possibly as guilty of Amnon's death as he was of his sin; he that would not prevent Amnon's sin, neither would he prevent his ruin, when he might have done both. H.

37. As a wilful murderer, Absalom could have no city of refuge in his own country ; therefore he fled out of the kingdom to his mother's father. Thus did God, by leaving Amnon a prey to his own passions, "raise up evil to David out of his own house : " a daughter ravished by her own brother ; that brother murdered by another brother ; and that other in exile on this very account, and destined soon to perish by a fate which would have been more deplorable if it had been less deserved. *Delaney.*

39. David mourned for Amnon a good while, but he being past recall, time wore off that grief ; he was *comforted concerning Amnon* : it also wore off too much his detestation of Absalom's sin ; instead of loathing him, as a murderer, he *longs to go forth to him*. At first, he could not find in his heart to do justice on him, now he can almost find in his heart to take him into his favor again. This was David's infirmity ; something God saw in his heart that made a difference, else we should have thought that he, as much as Eli, *honored his sons more than God*. H.

Joab's Stratagem to Procure Absalom's Recall.

14 : 1-20.

1. The words may be rendered : " *And Joab knew that the king's heart was against Absalom.* " In favor of this rendering it may be urged that the preposition generally means *against* not *toward* : that in the only other passage where the phrase occurs (Dan. 11 : 28), it unquestionably expresses hostility : that this meaning agrees better with the whole course of the narrative, which leaves the impression that Absalom's recall was a concession extorted from David by Joab's cunning. Although David had abandoned the ideas of vengeance which he at first entertained, his heart remained set against Absalom, and he showed no disposition to recall him from exile. This view of the state of David's feelings toward Absalom at once accounts for Joab's subtle scheme to convince the king of the hardship of prolonging Absalom's exile, and for the king's refusal to see Absalom when he had been persuaded to allow him to return. It may seem inconsistent with the passionate affection which he afterward displayed for his rebellious son, but it is not really so. A violent revulsion of feeling, when Absalom's life was in danger, and still more when he had perished by a miserable death, would be quite in accordance with David's impulsive character. A. F. K.

2. Herein does Joab's cunning appear not a

little, that he made choice of a woman, rather than a man, as being likely sooner to gain pity in her miseries ; a widow, which was a condition of life more proper for raising compassion ; a *grave woman* (as Josephus calls her), which made her better fitted for addressing the king ; and a woman, dwelling in some distant part, and not known in Jerusalem ; for the case, which she was to represent, might not admit of being too readily investigated. *Stackhouse.*

Joab employed a "wise woman" of Tekoah (afterward the birthplace of the prophet Amos), who appeared before the king in mourning, with a fictitious tale similar to the case of his own family. One of her two sons, she said, had slain the other in a quarrel, and all the family demanded the death of the homicide, which would leave her childless, and cut off her husband's name. When the king promised her protection, she applied the parable to him. P. S.—His contrivance of laying somewhat of a parallel case before the king was done so dexterously by the person he employed that the king took it for a real case, and gave judgment upon it as he had done upon Nathan's parable ; the judgment being in favor of the criminal, the manager might venture upon the application of it, and show that it was the case of his own family. H.—But there was a world-wide difference between the purpose of the parable of Nathan and that of the wise woman of Tekoah. Nathan's parable was designed to rouse the king's conscience as against his feelings ; the woman of Tekoah's, as prompted by Joab, to rouse his feelings as against his conscience. W. G. B.

13. She supposes Absalom's case to be, in effect, the same with that which she had put as her son's ; and therefore, if the king would protect her son, though he had slain his brother, much more ought he to protect his own, and to *fetch home his banished*. She names not Absalom, nor needed she to name him. And in those two words were two arguments which the king's tender spirit felt the force of : " He is banished, and has, for three years, undergone the disgrace and terror, and all the inconveniences, of banishment : *sufficient to such a one is this punishment* : but he is *thy* banished, thy son whom thou lovest." It is true Absalom's case differed very much from that which she had put. Absalom did not slay his brother upon a hasty passion, but maliciously, and upon an old grudge. H.

14. We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. What

could be better calculated to gain the attention of a poet like David than the beautiful images which she employs, and which are fully equal to any that he himself ever uttered. There is scarcely anything in all literature finer than this simple figure ; and if we are impressed at once by the exquisite beauty and pathos of this expression, how keenly must it have been appreciated by him—the great master of solemn thought and poetical expression? She had previously used another image, fine, indeed, and striking, but eclipsed by this. She had compared the prospective death of her only surviving son to the quenching of her last live coal—“They shall quench my coal that is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth ;” and now, again, death is compared to water, which being once lost upon the ground can be gathered up no more. The idea is, that there is no recovery of the life once lost, no return from the cold desolations of the grave. This idea is common in the Old Testament, though nowhere else expressed by the same image. It occurs, however, less frequently in the Psalms than might be expected, whereas, the instances in the Book of Job are numerous, and some of them very striking. *Kit.*

A very wise woman was the wise woman of Tekoah. One sentence of hers has lived through thirty centuries ; it still lingers on the lips and in the hearts of men. Amnon was dead ; but for David to treat Absalom as one who, though alive, was dead to him, would not restore Amnon to life. Grief for the dead could not absolve the living from their duties—their duties to the living. Men and women, who have grave imperative work to do in the world, must not waste the time and energy they need for the discharge of duty in ‘crying over spilt water. Let them rather accept the facts of life as they find them, spilt water and all ; let them accept even those sorrowful losses and changes which seem to obscure all the joys of life and to take away the very heart for duty, and under their new sorrowful conditions do the best they can for God and man. As applied to David her words carried this lesson :—“Death is the common event, too common to be an evil. Get good out of it then, what good you may and can. Do not let it weaken, but rather strengthen, you for the duties which remain to you. Do not let it alienate you from the living, but rather bind them to you in closer and more tender ties.” Their larger and more general application, the principle of the words, I take to be :—“Don’t fret over the inevitable, the irreparable. The

past is past, and cannot be recalled : therefore be the more intent on a wise use of the present.” *Cox.*

Further, she pleads God’s mercy and his clemency toward poor guilty sinners. “*God does not take away the soul, or life, but devises means that his banished, his children that have offended him, and are obnoxious to his justice, as Absalom is to thine, be not forever expelled from him.*” Here are two great instances of the mercy of God to sinners, properly urged as reasons for showing mercy. *First*, The patience he exercises toward them. His law is broken, yet he does not immediately take away the life of those that break it ; does not strike sinners dead, as justly he might, in the act of sin, but bears with them, and waits to be gracious. God’s vengeance had suffered Absalom to live ; why then should not David’s justice suffer him? *Secondly*, The provision he had made for their restoration to his favor, that though by sin they have banished themselves from him, yet they might not be expelled, or cast off, forever. *H.*

19-23. The king has a surmise that the hand of Joab is in the whole transaction, and the woman acknowledges that it is so. After the interview with the woman, David sends for Joab, and gives him leave to fetch back Absalom. Joab goes to Geshur and brings Absalom to Jerusalem. *W. G. B.*

24. Let him not see my face. To recall Absalom without giving him a full pardon was a most dangerous policy. It could not fail to irritate him. It may be inferred from verses 29 and 31 that he was confined to his house by David’s order, for otherwise he would not have had to wait until Joab came. *A. F. K.*

25. If “beauty is a gift,” “beauty is also a snare.” To few has the gift been so largely accorded as to Absalom ; to few has it proved a snare so deadly. In him the personal comeliness and vigor of Jesse’s line seems to have culminated. “In all Israel there was none like him for beauty ; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him ;” so says the ancient chronicler. *Cox.*—A poor commendation for a man that had nothing else in him valuable. Handsome are they that handsome do. Many a polluted deformed soul dwells in a fair and comely body ; witness Absalom’s, that was polluted with blood, and deformed with unnatural disaffection to his father and prince. In his body there was no blemish, but in his mind nothing but wounds and bruises. Those have reason to fear affliction in their children, who are better

pleased with their beauty than with their excellence of character. H.

Absalom Readmitted to David's Presence through Joab's Mediation.

Verses 28-33.

The king refuses to see his son, and for two years Absalom lives in his own house, without enjoying any of the privileges of the king's son. Then the patience of Absalom was exhausted. He sent for Joab to negotiate for a change of arrangements. But Joab would not see him. A second time he sent, and a second time Joab declined. But Absalom was not to be outdone in this way. He fell on a rude stratagem for bringing Joab to his presence. Their fields being adjacent to each other, Absalom sent his servants to set Joab's barley on fire. The irritation of such an unprovoked injury overcame Joab's unwillingness to meet Absalom; he went to him in a rage and demanded why this had been done. The matter of the barley would be easy to arrange; but now that he had met Joab he showed him that there were just two modes of treatment open to David,—either really to pardon, or really to punish him. This probably was just what Joab felt. There was no good, but much harm in the half-and-half policy which the king was pursuing. If Absalom was pardoned, let him be on friendly terms with the king. If he was not pardoned, let him be put to death for the crime he had committed. Joab was unable to refute Absalom's reasoning. And when he went to the king he would press that view on him likewise. And now, after two years of a half-and-half measure, the king sees no alternative but to yield. "When he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself to his face on the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom." This was the token of reconciliation and friendship. But it would not be with a clear conscience or an easy mind that David saw the murderer of his brother in full possession of the honors of the king's son. W. G. B.

Three years Absalom had been an exile with his father-in-law, and now, two years a prisoner at large in his own house, and, in both, better dealt with than he deserved; yet his spirit was still unhumbled, his pride unmortified, and, instead of being thankful that his life is spared,

he thinks himself sorely wronged that he is not restored to all his places at court. H.—In this whole account there is nothing but insult and injury to Joab, and the most formal obeisance before David. Not a word of proffered excuse or repentance, because his heart was already hardened, and his determination to dethrone his father fully formed and matured. With all his personal beauty and probable vanity, Absalom had a positive character of his own. His two years' reticent waiting for revenge against Amnon, followed by his cool deliberation in planning for and committing the deed of murder, show this. And not less is it manifest in this command to his servants, "Go, set Joab's field on fire." He certainly accomplished his object here. And all his subsequent conduct evinces like positiveness of character. His whole career has no single element of weakness or indecision. Had he possessed a *heart like David's*, he might have proved a worthy successor to David's throne—at least we see enough in him to explain the peculiar strength of David's attachment to this able though wayward and wicked son.

Absalom's character, conduct, and end may well be regarded as representative and typical, and point a convincing moral worth the study of the youth of our own times. Beauty was his curse, because it was that for which alone he was "praised in all Israel." Outwardly possessed of most attractive form, feature, and manner, he was inwardly deformed and corrupt. And *beauty of person, without an inward beauty of soul, without moral worth, without truth and purity of heart, without strength and sway of principle, ever has been, ever will be, a "fatal dower."* Its only necessary effect is the rule of vanity and pride and over-weening self-conceit, whose only ultimate ending is abasement, degradation, and ruin of the soul. And *where means of lavish self-indulgence are added to personal beauty, the peril of such ruin is made well-nigh sure.* Nothing but God's grace can deliver from either of these perils, much less from both combined. Let those that are exposed on either hand take counsel and warning from this sad history! And let parents, too, heed this signal lesson, preserved alike for them by Inspiration! B.

Section 270.

ABSALOM'S SUCCESSFUL CONSPIRACY. DAVID GOES FORTH FROM JERUSALEM.

2 SAMUEL 15 : 1-29.

15 1 AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and
 2 fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the
 gate : and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judg-
 ment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou ? And he said, Thy ser-
 3 vant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good
 4 and right ; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh
 that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come
 5 unto me, and I would do him justice ! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to do
 6 him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him. And on this
 manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment : so Absalom stole the
 hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And it came to pass at the end of four years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee,
 8 let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant
 vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall indeed bring me again
 9 to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he
 10 arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying,
 As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom is king in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were invited, and went in
 12 their simplicity ; and they knew not anything. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilon-
 ite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered the sacrifices. And
 the conspiracy was strong ; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after
 14 Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and
 let us flee ; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom : make speed to depart, lest he over-
 take us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever
 16 my lord the king shall choose. And the king went forth, and all his household after him.
 17 And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went
 18 forth, and all the people after him ; and they tarried in Beth-merhak. And all his servants
 passed on beside him ; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six
 19 hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. Then said the
 king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us ? return, and abide with the king :
 20 for thou art a stranger, and also an exile ; *return* to thine own place. Whereas thou camest
 but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us, seeing I go whither I may ?
 21 return thou, and take back thy brethren ; mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered
 the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my
 22 lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be. And
 David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and
 23 all the little ones that were with him. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the
 people passed over : the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people
 24 passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. And, lo, Zadok also *came*, and all the Levites
 with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God ; and they set down the ark of God, and
 25 Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said
 unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favor in the eyes of the
 26 LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation : but if he say thus, I
 27 have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. The
 king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art thou *not* a seer ? return into the city in peace, and

28 your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will
 29 tarry at the fords of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. Zadok
 therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem : and they abode there.

1-6. *How Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.* Absalom was the third son of David. He had killed his brother Amnon, the first-born son, because of a grievous wrong done to his own full sister, Tamar. The second son was now also dead, so that Absalom counted himself heir-presumptive to the throne. After killing Amnon he fled to Geshur, near Bashan, and remained three years with the king, his grandfather. Then he was permitted by David to return, and after two years more was admitted to his father's presence, and fully re-established in all his rights and privileges as a son. At once he begins, and for years deliberately prosecutes, a systematic plan for undermining his father's authority and substituting his own. As before, in his vengeance against Amnon, maintaining a studied deception for two years, and then commanding the murder in cold blood, so now, for four years, without compunction, and with unscrupulous determination, he pursues his ambitious and disloyal purpose. A strange contrast, we note in passing, between the sons of Saul and David in this particular. The son of a God-abandoned father was loyal, helpful, and faithful to the end, while the son of the repentant, forgiven David proves disloyal, persecuting, and impious, taking base advantage of his father's clemency, and of his many disqualifying infirmities and griefs.

The acts by which he sought, and in the end attained, superior popularity with the men of Israel, are recited in these verses, and are substantially the same that demagogues of every age have used. First, he attended to the matter of display. He clad his beautiful person in princely apparel, gathered a splendid retinue of attendants, with chariots, horsemen, and footmen, and so accustomed the people to the state and equipage of royalty as his own. Then he put himself in David's proper but neglected place, "in the gate of the city," where the great duty of hearing complaints and administering justice was devolved upon every Eastern king. Not, however, to do justice did Absalom rise up early and stand in the gate. Not to stay David's feeble hands, to supply David's necessitated neglects, but to enfeeble him the more, to call attention to his neglects, and to deepen the sense of grievance and discontent felt by the people. This he did under pretence of a deep concern for their welfare, with the declaration that he would right their wrongs and remove

their troubles, if only he had the power. And to this he added all personal tokens of interest and even affection, toward every one that came near him. After this method of flattery and disloyal insinuation, pursued in city and country for four years, "Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." B.

4. A judge in Israel. He that should himself have been judged to death for murder, has the impudence to aim at being a judge of others. We read not of Absalom's wisdom, virtue, or learning in the laws, nor had he given any proofs of his love to justice, but the contrary ; yet he wishes he were a judge. Those are often most ambitious of preferment that are least fit for it ; the best-qualified are the most modest and self-diffident, while it is no better than the spirit of an Absalom that says, *O that I were a judge in Israel !* H.

7-9. Nothing wants now but a cloak of religion, to perfect the treachery of that ungracious son, who carried peace in his name, war in his heart : and how easily is that put on ! Absalom hath a holy vow to be paid in Hebron ! The devout man had made it long since, while he was exiled in Syria ; and now he hastens to perform it ; "If the Lord shall bring me back again to Jerusalem, then will I serve the Lord." Wicked hypocrites dare to play with God, that they may mock men. *Bp. H.*

How Absalom covered his steps in initiating the rebellion. He professes to bethink him of a vow made at least six years before, when he was an exile in Geshur. The vow was to *serve*—i.e., sacrifice to the Lord, if the Lord should bring him again to Jerusalem. Six years the vow has been held in abeyance, but now it must be paid—in *Hebron !* He asks and obtains David's permission to go. He selects Hebron as having been his own birth-place, and the old capital of David's kingdom. As a sacred city, the residence of priests, it was also a natural place for his proposed sacrifice. As a national centre, where were many still discontented at the transfer of the government to Jerusalem, and as near that city where the proposed blow is to be struck, it is the place for starting the conspiracy. "So he arose, and went to Hebron." But we hear nothing of any vow performed or sacrifice offered. B.

7. The nature of the case forbids the period of *forty* years. Josephus, and also the Syriac and Arabic versions, have it *four* years. Two

ancient manuscripts have it, not "years," but *days*—in which case it may date from Absalom's kind reception home by his father. It should be, *after four years*; for so long Absalom had been pushing this enterprise, ingratiating himself into the good graces of the men of Israel; making special friends in every city of the land, who when the opportune moment should at length arrive, and the trump of rebellion should sound, would be ready to swell the cry—"Absalom reigneth in Hebron." H. C.

10-12. *How the conspiracy was formed, and what it came to.* Two hundred men he invited to go with him from Jerusalem, to participate in his sacrificial feast. These, it is intimated, understood nothing of his disloyal purposes, but were afterward evidently seduced into sympathy with his treason. From Hebron Absalom sent men to create disaffection and foment the conspiracy throughout all the tribes, everywhere to give the impression broadly forth that Judah was prepared to proclaim him king in Hebron, and to secure instant action, at a given signal by the disaffected in every place. Then he solicited the counsel and aid of Ahithophel, a man of whom David touchingly speaks as his own familiar friend in whom he trusted, his chosen guide and companion, with whom he took counsel and walked to the house of God (Ps. 41 and 55). This man deserted his royal master and friend, trampled all sacred ties, human and Divine, under foot, and became the main pillar of the rebellion. From the time of his accession to the counsels of Absalom until the day his counsel was rejected, the conspiracy was successful. Wisely Absalom had planned and acted throughout in securing the favor of the people, and now, having engaged David's best-known counsellor as his ally, multitudes flock to him at Hebron, and he is prepared to move against Jerusalem. B.

From this stage of the proceedings, the historian turns our thought to David (15 : 13 and onward). The whole country is rising to hail Absalom king, and to swell the hosts of his armed followers. H. C.

13, 14. *The tidings brought to David, he at once determined to flee.* The narrative that follows discloses the reasons and motives which actuated his flight. Not merely that his age and infirmities impaired his physical and mental energies, nor that his excessive love for Absalom, so shocked and wounded, rendered him averse to such an unnatural conflict, but the deep conviction that this revolt of his son was a part of God's previously declared judgment against his great sin, wrought in his now thoroughly hum-

bled heart an unwillingness to resist. And with this feeling of submission to the Divine discipline was associated an unwillingness to involve the people, and the beautiful city itself, in his personal calamities. To save his faithful dependents from destruction and the city from assault and ruin, he commands an instant departure. And the many touching incidents of his flight all the way over the Jordan to Mahanaim in Gilead, as well as the third Psalm, written at that period, show how submissively he bowed his soul before God, how he still trusted and hoped in God amid the overwhelming billows, how patiently he could bear every insult and trial, if only he might recover the peace and joy of God's restored favor! B.

David did not call a council, but consulting only with God and his own heart, determined immediately to quit Jerusalem. He took up this strange resolve, so disagreeable to his character as a man of courage, as a penitent, submitting to the rod, and lying down under God's correcting hand. Conscience now reminded him of his sin in the matter of Uriah, and the sentence he was under for it, that *evil shou'd rise against him out of his own house*. "Now," thinks he, "the Word of God begins to be fulfilled, and it is not for me to contend with it or fight against it: God is righteous, and I submit." Before unrighteous Absalom he could justify himself and stand it out; but before the righteous God he must condemn himself, and yield to his judgments. Thus he *accepts the punishment of his iniquity*. H.—He was not prostrated by unmanly fear, nor did he abandon his hope in God. He took all prudent means to arrest, if possible, the threatened danger to which his rule and even his life were exposed. But his whole conduct showed that his "sin was ever before him," and that he was deeply conscious that it was the visitation of God which was now upon him. W. Lee.

It was a wise measure on the part of the king to resolve on immediate flight from Jerusalem, not only to avoid being shut up in the city, and to prevent a massacre in its streets, but to give his adherents the opportunity of gathering around him. Indeed, in the hour of danger, the king seemed his old self again. We can quite understand how, in David's peculiar state of mind, trials in which he recognized the dealings of God would rouse him to energy, while the even tenor of affairs left him listless. No weakness now—outward or inward! Prudence, determination, and courage in action; but, above all, a constant acknowledgment of God, self-humiliation, and a contin-

uous reference of all to Him, marked his every step. A. E.

17-29. A more moving spectacle could not be exhibited than this of a king, venerable for his years and victories, sacred in the characters both of his piety and of prophecy, renowned for prowess and revered for wisdom, thus reduced to the condition of a fugitive, to a sudden and extreme necessity of flying for his life, from the presence and by the rebellion of his own son. *Delaney*.—His departure from Jerusalem is related with a minuteness to which we have no parallel in the Scripture history of any single day, except that of which this was the type, when the son of David, betrayed by "his own familiar friend," and rejected by his own people, went out by the same path "bearing his reproach." It was early in the morning when the king, leaving his palace in the care of his ten concubines, went forth by the eastern gate with all his household and a crowd of people; for there were still many who showed him the deepest attachment. Among his faithful guard of Cherethites and Pelethites, and his chosen heroes, the six hundred who had followed him ever since his residence at Gath, was Ittai the Gittite. David released him and his countrymen from their allegiance; but Ittai vowed that he would follow the king in life or death, and David bade him lead the way. They passed over the brook Kidron (the Cedron of the New Testament), by the way that led over the Mount of Olives to Jericho and the wilderness, while "all the country wept with a loud voice." As David halted in the valley to let the people pass on, he was joined by Zadok and Abiathar, with all the Levites, bringing with them the ark of God. With self-renouncing reverence, David refused to have the ark removed, for his sake, from the sanctuary where he had fixed its abode, and exposed to share his perils. If Jehovah willed to show him favor, he would bring him back to see both the ark and His habitation; if not—"Behold here am I! let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him!" He reminded the priests that they could do him effectual service in the city by employing their two sons, who were both swift runners, to bring him tidings, and so he sent them back with the ark. P. S.

19-21. Ittai was a stranger who had but lately come to Jerusalem, and as he was not attached to David personally, it would be safer for him to return to the city and offer to the reigning king the services which David could no longer reward. But the generous proposal of David was rejected with equal nobility on the part of Ittai. He had made up his mind, like

Ruth the Moabitess with reference to Naomi, that wherever David was, in life or in death, there also he should be. How affecting must it have been to David to receive such an assurance from a stranger! W. G. B.

23. The people's sympathy with David in his affliction. When he and his attendants *passed over the brook Kidron* (the very same brook that Christ passed over, when he entered upon his sufferings, John 18:1), *toward the way of the wilderness*, which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho, *all the country wept with a loud voice*. H. — *The ravine of Kidron* is the deep ravine on the east of Jerusalem, now commonly known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which separates the city from the Mount of Olives. The single mention of it in the New Testament is perhaps designed to recall the present occasion and to suggest the parallel between David fleeing from Jerusalem, and Christ leaving the city which had rejected Him, as the treachery of Judas was the counterpart and "fulfilment" of that of Ahithophel. A. F. K.

24. The priests and Levites firmly adhered to David and his interest. They knew David's great affection to them and their office, notwithstanding his failings; the method Absalom took to gain people's affections made no impression upon them; and therefore they steadily adhered to David; Zadok and Abiathar and all the Levites, if he go will accompany him, and take the ark with them, that by it they might ask counsel of God for him.

25-27. He is very submissive to the holy will of God, concerning the issue of his present dark dispensation. He hopes the best, and hopes for it from the favor of God, which he looks upon to be the fountain of all good; "If God favor me so far, I shall be settled again as formerly:" but he provides for the worst; "If he deny me this favor, if he say, *I have no delight in thee*, I know I deserve the continuance of his displeasure, his holy will be done;" see him here waiting to receive the event, and willing to refer himself to God concerning it. "*Let him do to me as seemeth good to him*, all is well that God does." Observe with what satisfaction he speaks of the Divine disposal: not only, "He can do what he will," subscribing to his power, or, "He *may* do what he will," subscribing to his sovereignty, or, "He *will* do what he will," subscribing to his unchangeableness, but, *Let him do what he will*, subscribing to his wisdom and goodness. It is our interest as well as duty cheerfully to acquiesce in the will of God, whatever befalls us. That we may not complain of what is, let us see God's hand in all events;

and that we may not be afraid of what shall be, let us see all events in God's hand. H.

These words show how much God was in David's mind in connection with the events of that humiliating day. They show, too, that he did not regard his case as desperate. But everything turned on the will of God. It might be that, in His great mercy, He would bring him back to Jerusalem. His former promises led him to think of this as a possible, perhaps probable, termination of the insurrection. But it might also be that the Lord had no more delight in him. The chastening with which He was now visiting him for his sin might involve the success of Absalom. In that case, all that David would say was that he was at God's disposal, and would offer no resistance to His holy will. If he was to be restored, he would be restored without the aid of the ark ; if he was to be destroyed, the ark could not save him. Zadok and his Levites must carry it back into the city. W. G. B.

I understand not how a man can front the awful possibilities of a future on earth, knowing all the points at which he is vulnerable, and all the ways by which disaster may come down upon him, and retain his sanity, except he be-

lieves that all is ruled, not merely by a God far above him, who may be as unsympathizing as He is omnipotent, but by his elder Brother, the Son of God, who showed His heart by all His dealings with us here below, and who loves as tenderly, and sympathizes as closely with us as ever He did when on earth He gathered the weary and the sick around Him. Is it not a thing, men and women, worth having, to have this for the settled conviction of your hearts, that Christ is moving all the pulses of your life, and that nothing falls out without the intervention of His presence and the power of His will working through it? Is there any other place where a man can plant his foot and say, Now I am on a rock and I care not what comes? The riddle of Providence is solved, and the discipline of Providence is being accomplished, when we have grasped this conviction,—All events do serve me, for all circumstances come from His will and pleasure, which is love ; and everywhere where I go—be it in the darkness of disaster or in the sunshine of prosperity—I shall see standing before me that familiar and beloved shape, and shall be able to say, "It is the Lord." Friends and brethren, that is the faith to live by, that is the faith to die by ; and without it life is a mockery and a misery. A. M.

Section 271.

INCIDENTS OF DAVID'S DEPARTURE : HUSHAI ; ZIBA ; SHIMEL.

2 SAMUEL 15 : 30-37 ; 16 : 1-14.

30 AND David went up by the ascent of the *mount of Olives*, and wept as he went up ; and he had his head covered, and went barefoot : and all the people that were with him covered every
31 man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the
32 counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the *ascent*, where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him
33 with his coat rent, and earth upon his head : and David said unto him, If thou passest on with
34 me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me : but if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king ; as I have been thy father's servant in time past, so will I
35 now be thy servant : then shalt thou defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the
36 priests. Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son ; and by them ye shall send unto me everything that ye shall hear. So Hushai David's friend came into the city ; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

16 1 And when David was a little past the top of the *ascent*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of

2 wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses
 be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to
 3 eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, And
 where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem:
 4 for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said
 the king to Ziba, Behold, thine is all that pertaineth unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I do
 obeisance; let me find favor in thy sight, my lord, O king.
 5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family
 of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came out, and cursed still
 6 as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the
 7 people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei
 8 when he cursed, Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and man of Belial: the LORD hath re-
 turned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and
 the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art
 9 *taken* in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood. Then said Abishai the son of
 Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I
 10 pray thee, and take off his head. And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of
 Zeruiah? Because he curseth, and because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David; who
 11 then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his ser-
 vants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more *may*
 this Benjamite now *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.
 12 It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done unto me, and that the LORD will requite
 13 me good for *his* cursing of me this day. So David and his men went by the way: and Shimei
 went along on the hill side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him,
 14 and cast dust. And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary; and he
 refreshed himself there.

Very touching and instructive are the recounted incidents of David's flight from Jerusalem to the plain of the Jordan. Fully and impressively they open to us the very heart of this trustful, penitent, submissive king. We see his self-forgetting generosity, in offering to release Ittai the Gittite and his band of six hundred from the discomforts and perils of his wandering. We admire the steadfastness and strength of his faith, the absolute resting of this great and fearful issue upon God, which he shows in calmly sending back the ark of God, and all that ministered to its care and worship. With thankful wonder we read his words of humble submission and implicit trust: "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again; but if he say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him." A convincing proof of this submissive spirit we find in his meek endurance of Shimei's shameless cursing. "Let him alone and let him curse," he said to Abishai, "for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing." Yet with this submission; we also discern his continued faith in prayer, and in the need of seconding his prayer by every right means of action. Knowing Ahithophel's treachery, and aware of his practical wisdom, David beseeches the Lord to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

Then he persuades Hushai, another friend and counsellor, to join Absalom and counteract the counsels of Ahithophel. And, as we read, God answered the prayer by making the means effectual. The counsel of Hushai prevailed, "For the Lord appointed to defeat the good (wise) counsel of Ahithophel, to the end that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." In connection with these incidents, we note these affecting references: "The king also passed over the brook Kidron;" "and David went up by the ascent of Olivet, and wept." Not the kingdom and the kingship of David alone, but many marked localities, as Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Kidron, and Olivet, all had a designed typical connection through David's history, with the Son of David. And as so often remarked, in this representative and typical association we find the special interest and value of his whole story. B.—It is touching to see David, mild, self-possessed, thoroughly humble, and most considerate of others. Adversity is the element in which he shines; it is in prosperity he falls; in adversity he rises beautifully. After the humbling events in his life to which our attention has been lately called, it is a relief to witness the noble bearing of the venerable saint amid the pelting of this most pitiless storm. W. G. B.

15 : 30. With a heavy heart, and a covered

head, and a weeping eye, and bare feet, is David gone away from Jerusalem. Never did he with more joy come up to this city, than now he left it with sorrow : how could he do otherwise, whom the insurrection of his own son drove out from his house, from his throne, from the ark of God ? *Bp. II.*

31. He prays not against Ahithophel's person, but against his counsel, that God would *turn it into foolishness* ; that if he gave wise counsel, it might be rejected as foolish ; or if it were followed, that by some providence or other it might be defeated, and not attain the end. David prayed this in a firm belief that God has all hearts in his hand, and tongues, too ; that when he pleases he can *take away the understandings of the aged, and make the judges fools* (Job 12 : 17 ; Is. 3 : 2, 3), and in hope that God would own and plead his just and injured cause. We may pray in faith and should pray with fervency, that God will turn that counsel into foolishness which is taken against his people.

32. And now Providence brought Hushai to him, while he was yet speaking. God heard and sent him the person that should be instrumental to answer his prayer. H.—While it seemed good unto God to inflict this salutary discipline on the spirit of David, it also seemed good unto Him by the arrangements of His providence to open a way for its prosperous termination. The return of Zadok and Abiathar, but more especially of Hushai, was the preparative in the order of events for the safe and happy return of David himself in triumph to that very city from which he was now taking flight as a mournful outcast. The same God who laid this trial upon him provided also the way of escape from it. T. C.

34. For a correct estimate of the conduct of David in advising Hushai to offer his service to Absalom, for the purpose of betraying him, we should recollect that Absalom, as a traitor, a murderer, and a rebel, had forfeited all the rights of society ; and David could be no more guilty of perfidy in forming a design to supplant him, than any man would be who should deceive a madman so as to prevent his murdering his friends. *Stackhouse.*—Absalom was an unnatural rebel, and Ahithophel a traitor ; and on the quashing of their rebellious plans depended the religion and prosperity of the kingdom. Accordingly, David only desired that of Hushai, which every good subject that wished well to his king and country was in duty bound to do. *Chandler.*

35-37. His main business will be to oppose the counsel of Ahithophel, try to secure a little

time to David, and thus give him a chance of escape. Moreover, he is to co-operate with the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and through their sons send word to David of everything he hears. Hushai obeys David, and as he returns to the city from the east, Absalom arrives from the south, before David is more than three or four miles away. But for the Mount of Olives intervening, Absalom might have seen the company that followed his father. W. G. B.

Ziba Brings Food to David.

16 : 1-4.

Shortly after parting from Hushai, the king's forces met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. He had a couple of asses with him, laden with two hundred rounds of bread, one hundred bunches of raisins, one hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine. When David asked him, shortly, What meanest thou by these ? Ziba was ready with an answer which went to the king's heart. The asses were for the women and children to ride on, the food for the soldiers, and the wine for those to drink who might faint in the weary wilderness. Faithfulness exists somewhere, the king thought as he heard these cunning words. Ziba's present was a ray of hope in the gloom. But, he asked, where is thy master's son ? "At Jerusalem," was the answer, "for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore to me the kingdom of my father." It was a falsehood. Probably it was as true as the story of the bread and the fruit and the wine. Unfortunately, David believed it. And he acted on his belief : "Thine," he said, "is everything which was Mephibosheth's." *Sime.*—That Ziba was calumniating Mephibosheth is sufficiently obvious. How could Mephibosheth, an insignificant cripple, who had never claimed the crown, or taken any part in politics, expect to be made king, even in the confusion of parties which might ensue upon Absalom's rebellion ? Ziba's story was an audacious fiction, invented in the hope of getting a grant of the estate which he was cultivating for Mephibosheth's benefit, and in spite of its improbability, it passed muster in the haste and confusion of the moment. David was rash and hasty in thus treating his grant to Mephibosheth as forfeited by treason without a word of inquiry. This unreflecting impetuosity was a marked fault of his character. A. F. K.

Shimei's Shameful Abuse of David.

Verses 5-13.

Shimei was guilty of every form of offensive and provoking assault. He threw stones, he

called abusive names, he hurled wicked charges against David ; he declared that God was fighting against him, and fighting justly against such a man of blood, such a man of Belial. And, as if this were not enough, he stung him in the most sensitive part of his nature, reproaching him with the fact that it was his son that now reigned instead of him, because the Lord had delivered the kingdom into his hand. But even all this accumulation of coarse and shameful abuse failed to ruffle David's equanimity. W. G. B.

7, 8. What was done long since to the house of Saul, is the only thing which Shimei can recall, and with which he upbraids David, because that was the thing that he himself was a loser by. No man could be more innocent of the blood of the house of Saul than David was. Once and again he spared Saul's life, while Saul sought his. When Saul and his sons were slain by the Philistines, David and his men were many miles off ; and when they heard it lamented it. From the murder of Abner and Ishbosheth he had sufficiently cleared himself ; and yet *all the blood of the house of Saul* must be laid at his door ; innocence is no fence against malice and falsehood.

10, 11. David observes *the hand of God in it* : *The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, and again, So let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* As it was Shimei's sin, it was not from God but from his own wicked heart, nor did God's hand in it excuse or extenuate it, much less justify it, any more than it did their sin who put Christ to death. But as it was David's affliction, it was from the Lord, one of the evils which he raised up against him. David looked above the instrument of his trouble to the supreme Director, as Job, when the plunderers had stripped him, acknowledges, *The Lord hath taken away.* Nothing more proper to quiet a soul under affliction than an eye to the hand of God in it : *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* The scourge of the tongue is God's rod. H.

The sin of Shimei's curse was his own ; the smart of the curse was God's. God wills that as David's chastisement which he hates as Shimei's wickedness. Wicked men are never the freer from guilt or punishment for that hand which the holy God hath in their offensive actions. Yet David can say, "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him ;" as meaning to give a reason of his own patience, rather than Shimei's impunity. The issue showed how well David could distinguish betwixt the act of God and of a traitor. Bp. H.

12. He comforts himself with hopes that God would, some way or other, bring good to him

out of his affliction, would balance the trouble itself, and recompense his patience under it ; "*The Lord will requite me good for his cursing.*" If God bid Shimei grieve me, it is that he himself may the more sensibly comfort me ; surely he has mercy in store for me which he is preparing me for by this trial." We may depend upon God as our Paymaster, not only for our services, but for our sufferings. *Let them curse, but bless thou.* H.

The fortitude of the soldier's heart was almost second nature to David. He was not at all the man to pale before scenes of martial conflict or the agonies of wounds and death. But here are far other ingredients of grief and woe. David saw in this cursing, and, indeed, in this whole conspiracy, the Lord's rebuke of his own great sins. He could bear any and every trial involved in it save this one—the frown of his own holy Lord God ! We see yet more of David's heart in those Psalms (42 and 43) which obviously relate to this period of his history. These Psalms and this history are at one in the points of enforced exile from the place of hallowed worship ; of the location of their respective events—viz., in the land beyond the Jordan—that of "the Hermonites ;" and of crossing that river where "deep called unto deep at the noise of its water-courses," suggesting in sad symbol the waves of deep sorrow that dashed over his soul ; and, not least, of the almost insupportable sense of depression and discouragement against which his soul is perpetually struggling and which it tasks the utmost energy of his will to withstand : "Why art thou cast down, oh, my soul ? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet have cause to praise him for the help of his countenance" and the joy of his salvation. H. C.

14. And so the king, and his mighty men and all his people, press down the narrow and tortuous road, out of the reach of Absalom. It has been a long and weary day. At last, at the foot of the steep hills, they are where they can defend themselves for the night, and at the first alarm put the Jordan behind them. Knox.—There they rested after the long eventful day, at the ford or bridge of the river. Among the thickets of the Jordan, the asses of Ziba were unladen, and the weary travellers refreshed themselves, and waited for tidings from Jerusalem. It must have been long after nightfall that the joyful sound was heard of the two youths, sons of the High Priests, bursting in upon the encampment with the news from the capital. Stanley.

At certain times and in certain circumstances

it may be the duty of one who is maligned to repel falsehood and vindicate truth in the world ; but all thoughts of vengeance are absolutely forbidden by the law of Christ. " Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord." This is not only a prohibition, it is also a privileged exemption. From this rough and dangerous work the Son makes his people free. When a neighbor assails our good name, our own hearts too readily prompt to vengeance. A son of Zeruah is ready within us to say, Let me go over and take off his head. But, beware : like David, see rather God's hand permitting the trial to come, and adjust yourself to meet it so that it will press you nearer to your Lord, and keep you closer in his steps. *Arnot.*

What then is to be done, when on account of our sins God leads us by a path that is full of thorns and thistles ? The history of David answers the question : he bends, he prays, he acts. He neglects no legitimate means to maintain himself as much as possible in his difficult position ; but above all, he humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, and bears what he has merited with patience. He who knows thus to bear his cross, is evidently already on the road to win the lost crown. While we follow in his footsteps of trust and submission, yet when heart and flesh faint and fail, let us rest upon the Greater than David, who trod this same path through the valley of Kedron for our deliverance. *Van O.*

Section 272.

AHITHOPHEL AND HUSHAI AT ABSALOM'S COUNCIL CHAMBER. SUICIDE OF AHITHOPHEL.

2 SAMUEL 16 : 15-23 ; 17 : 1-23.

16 15 AND Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel 16 with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto 17 Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king. And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend ? why wentest thou not with thy friend ? 18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay ; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men 19 of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve ? *should I not serve* in the presence of his son ? as I have served in thy father's presence, 20 so will I be in thy presence. Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give your counsel what we 21 shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house ; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father : 22 then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house ; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all 23 Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God : so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

17 1 Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand 2 men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night : and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid : and all the people that are with him 3 shall flee ; and I will smite the king only : and I will bring back all the people unto thee : 4 the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned : so all the people shall be in peace. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. 5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith. 6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath 7 spoken after this manner : shall we do *after* his saying ? if not, speak thou. And Hushai said 8 unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given this time is not good. Hushai said moreover, Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field : and thy father is a man of war, and 9 will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place : and it will come to pass, when some of them be fallen at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say,

10 There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And even he that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt : for all Israel knoweth that thy father
 11 is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men. But I counsel that all Israel be gathered together unto thee, from Dan even to Beer sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for
 12 multitude ; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground : and of him and of all the men that are with him we will not leave so much as one.
 13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will
 14 draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.
 15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel
 16 counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel ; and thus and thus have I counselled. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night at the fords of the wilderness, but in any wise pass over ; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.
 17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel ; and a maidservant used to go and tell them ;
 18 and they went and told king David : for they might not be seen to come into the city. But a lad saw them, and told Absalom : and they went both of them away quickly, and came to the
 19 house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court ; and they went down thither. And the woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and strewed bruised corn
 20 thereon ; and nothing was known. And Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house ; and they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan ? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they re-
 21 turned to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David ; and they said unto David, Arise ye, and pass
 22 quickly over the water : for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan : by the morning light
 23 there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan. And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself ; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

18, 19. Hushai might have been a useful guide, but Absalom is bent on evil, and Ahithophel helps him in his wickedness. Hushai only seeks to defeat the evil counsel of the latter. This he attempts for David's sake, as well as Absalom's. Absalom could, if he had been true, have had a most valuable counsellor in Hushai, but, under the circumstances, all Hushai can do is to endeavor to help David, or to give him time to escape, by counselling delay on the part of Absalom. *F. Hastings.*

There is no way but to engage Absalom in some further act incapable of forgiveness. Ordinary crimes are for vulgar offenders : let Absalom sin eminently : and do that which may make the world at once to blush and wonder. Who would ever have thought that Ahithophel had lived at court, at the council-table of a David ? Who would think that mouth had ever spoken well ? Yet had he been no other than as the oracle of God, to the religious court of Israel ; even while he was not wise enough to be good. Policy and grace are not always lodged under one roof. This man, while he was one of

David's deep counsellors, was one of David's fools, that said in their hearts, " There is no God ;" else he could not have hoped to make good an evil with worse, to build the success of treason upon incest. *Bp. H.*—While recoiling with horror from this unnatural crime, we cannot but call to mind the judgment predicted upon David (ch. 12 : 11, 12), and note how, as so often was the case, the event, supernaturally foretold, happened, not by some sudden interference, but through a succession of natural causes. *A. E.*

23. When wickedness is armed with wit and power, none but a God can defeat it. If the bounty of God have thought good to furnish his creatures with powers to war against himself, his wisdom knows how to turn the abuse of those powers to the shame of the owners and the glory of the giver. *Bp. H.*

Ch. 17. Absalom is in peaceable possession of Jerusalem, the palace royal is his own, and the thrones of judgment, even the thrones of the house of David. His good father reigned in Hebron, and only over the tribe of Judah, above seven

years, and was not hasty to destroy his rival : his government was built upon a Divine promise, which he was sure of the performance of in due time, and therefore he waited patiently in the mean time. But the young man, Absalom, not only hastens from Hebron to Jerusalem, but is impatient there till he has destroyed his father ; cannot be content with his throne till he has his life ; for his government is founded in iniquity, and therefore feels itself tottering, and thinks itself obliged to do everything with violence. H.

Ahithophel's Counsel Defeated by Hushai.

Verses 1-14.

1. This night. The night following David's flight and Absalom's entrance into Jerusalem. Ahithophel's advice was excellent. The success of the rebellion would be insured by striking a sudden blow, and securing the king's person. A small body of picked troops might easily have overtaken David, who was not likely to get more than twelve or fifteen miles from Jerusalem the first day. A. F. K.

1-3. Ahithophel advises that he be pursued immediately with a flying army, which he himself undertakes the command of, that the king only be smitten, and his forces dispersed, and then the people that were now for him, would fall in with Absalom, of course, and there would not be such a long war as had been between the house of Saul and David (verses 1-3). *The man whom thou seekest, is as if all returned.* By this, it appears that Absalom had declared his design to be upon David's life, and Ahithophel concurs with him in it. H.

Ahithophel's counsel was a masterpiece alike of sagacity and of wickedness. He proposed to take a select body of twelve thousand out of the troops that had already flocked to Absalom's standard, and follow the fugitive king. That very night he would set out ; and in a few hours they would overtake the king and his handful of defenders ; they would destroy no life but the king's only ; and thus, by an almost bloodless revolution, they would place Absalom peacefully on the throne. The advantages of the plan were obvious. It was prompt, it seemed certain of success, and it would avoid an unpopular slaughter. W. G. B.

7-13. How plausibly Hushai reasons ; he insists much upon it, that David was a great soldier, a man of great conduct, courage, and experience ; all knew and owned this, even Absalom himself : *Thy father is a man of war, a mighty man, and not so weary and weak-handed as*

Ahithophel imagines. His retiring from Jerusalem must be imputed, not to his cowardice, but his prudence. His attendants, though few, were mighty men, men of celebrated bravery, and versed in all the arts of war. They were all exasperated against Absalom, were chafed in their minds and would fight with the utmost fury ; so that with their courage and their rage there would be no standing before them. Thus does he represent them as formidable as Ahithophel had made them despicable. He suggests that probably David and some of his men would lie in ambush, and fall upon Absalom's soldiers before they were aware, and the defeat, though but of a small party, would dispirit all the rest. *First*, He advises that all Israel should be gathered together, his taking it for granted that they were all for him, and giving him an opportunity to see them all together under his command, would gratify him as much as anything. *Secondly*, He advises that Absalom go to battle in his own person, as if he looked upon him to be a better soldier than Ahithophel, more fit to give command and have the honor of the victory, insinuating that Ahithophel had put a slight upon him in offering to go without him. He counselled that which seemed to secure success without running any hazard. For if they could raise such vast numbers as they promised themselves, wherever they found him, they should not fail to crush him. H.

The pretences were fairer, though the grounds were unsound. First, to sweeten his opposition he yields the praise of wisdom to his adversary in all other counsels, that he may have leave to deny it in this ; then he suggests certain apparent truths concerning David's valor and skill, to give countenance to the inferences of his improbabilities : lastly, he cunningly feeds the proud humor of Absalom in magnifying the power and extent of his commands, and ends in the glorious boast of his fore-promised victory. As it is with faces, so with counsel, that is fair that pleaseth. *Bp. II.*—The counsel of Hushai pleased better than that of Ahithophel, and so it was preferred. Absalom's overweening vanity becomes the means of defeating the scheme and laying the foundation of Absalom's ruin. W. G. B.

The most dexterous and shrewd part of this advice was the proposal to make a general levy of all Israel to be commanded in person by Absalom—thus presenting him with a picture of alluring magnificence and glory, mixed up with such an assurance of success as completely carried the acquiescence of this ambitious and wicked prince.

14. Hushai's advice was the proximate cause of Absalom's ruin ; but it was the Lord who had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and this to the intent that He might bring evil upon Absalom. It was not only He who put the counter-advice into the heart of Hushai, but it was He who inclined Absalom and the men of Israel to follow it. T. C.—God made use of a wicked son to punish the father's offences, and then cut off the very instrument of his vengeance, who, by the means he took to distress and destroy his father, had rendered himself the abhorrence of God and man. *Chandler.*

15, 16. Hushai, as if apprehensive that his advice might not be followed, sends off to David to be prepared for the worst. He bids him speedily pass over Jordan. It is interesting to mark the geographical track of every movement recorded in Scripture ; and to learn how the incidental notices, as "of the plains in the wilderness," tally with the descriptions of travellers. En-rogel is in the immediate environs of Jerusalem, S.S.W., and on the brook Kidron. Bahurim, again, is the place where Shimei cursed David, after he had passed the ridge of Olivet. T. C.

17-19. Jonathan and Ahimaaz are sent, desecrated, pursued, preserved. The fidelity of a maid instructed them in their message ; the subtlety of a woman saved their lives. At the well of Rogel, they received their message ; in the well of Bahurim, were their lives saved. The sudden wit of a woman hath choked the mouth of her well with dried corn, that it might not bewray the messengers.

22. And now David hears safely of his danger, and prevents it ; and though weary with travel and laden with sorrow, he must spend the night in journeying. God's promises of his deliverance and the confirmation of his kingdom, may not make him neglect the means of his safety. If we be faithful, we may not be careless ; since our diligence and care are appointed for the factors of that Divine providence. The acts of God must abate nothing of ours ; rather must we labor by doing that which he requireth, to further that which he decreeth. *Bp. H.*

Ahithophel, foreseeing the fatal result of delay, his ambitious hopes all frustrated, with the certain infamy and punishment of his treason in clear view, deliberately goes to his own city of Giloh, and, setting his household affairs in order, puts an end to his life. B.—He saw in exercise of his shrewd discernment that all was now over with the cause ; and what, perhaps, was sorer to him than this, there was the mortifica-

tion of wounded vanity in that the counsel of Hushai was preferred before his own ; and so, in the extremity of his agonized feelings, he, like another traitor of still greater notoriety, went and hanged himself. He is the Judas of the Old Testament ; and herein we behold the like fate of these two men—the one who betrayed David his king, and the other who betrayed the Son of David his Lord. T. C.—His name has passed into a byword for the truth that "God taketh the wise in his own craftiness ;" and his unscrupulous treason forbids all sympathy with his fate. We may apply to him what was said of one of our own party leaders : "His great crimes were enhanced by his immense talents, of which God gave him the use, and the devil the application." P. S.

What a mixture do we find here of wisdom and madness ! Ahithophel will needs hang himself ; there is madness : he will yet set his house in order ; there is an act of wisdom. And could it be possible that he, who was so wise as to set his house in order, should be so mad as to hang himself ? that he should care for his house, who cared not for either body or soul ? How vain it is for a man to be wise, if he be not wise in God ! How prosperous are the cares of idle worldlings, that prefer all other things to themselves ; and, while they look at what they have in their coffers, forget what they have in their breasts ! *Bp. H.*—His name, *Ahithophel*, signifies, *the brother of a fool*. Nothing indicates so much folly as self-murder. Observe how deliberately he did it, and of malice prepense against himself : not in a heat, but he went home to his city, to his house, to do it ; and, which is strange, took time to consider of it, and yet did it. H.—In the trouble of a righteous man there is hope ; but in the trouble of the wicked there is none. He had no courage to make any further trial ; but, giving the whole matter up for lost, to avoid an ignominious death, which he knew was what he merited, he went home to put an end to his life, as many others have since done under the like circumstances. *Jones of Nayland.*

Repentance and remorse, how terrible is the gulf which divides these two, terrible well-nigh as that which separates heaven and hell—remorse, of the earth earthly, of the flesh fleshly ; and it is scarce too much to say of the devil devilish ; born as it is, not of grief to have offended a loving Father and done despite to a Spirit of grace ; but born of wounded pride, of anger against ourselves that the proud idol of self, so long the secret object of our worship, lies by our own act shattered in the dust, and as we too

surely feel, never to be set on its feet again. Remorse, if it have tears at all, they are tears scorching, withering, drying up with their fierce heat every green thing in the soul. But the tears of repentance, when the hard rock of some sinner's heart has been smitten by Christ's cross as by a rod, and these waters gush freely forth, how different an operation is theirs, healing, quickening, reviving all that they touch and whithersoever they come. Remorse is that sorrow of the world whereof the apostle speaks as a sorrow working death, which literally wrought death in that unhappy one of whom we are meditating now. *Trench.*

Section 273.

DAVID HOSPITABLY RECEIVED AT MAHANAIM. AN ARMY ORGANIZED UNDER JOAB. ABSALOM'S HOST, ENCAMPED IN GILEAD, IS ATTACKED AND SMITTEN BY DAVID'S ARMY. ABSALOM, CAUGHT IN A GREAT OAK, IS SLAIN BY JOAB. TIDINGS BORNE TO DAVID. HIS LAMENT OVER ABSALOM.

2 SAMUEL 17 : 24-29 ; 18 : 1-33.

24 THEN David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of
25 Israel with him. And Absalom set Amasa over the host instead of Joab. Now Amasa was the
son of a man, whose name was Ithra the Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Na-
26 hash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. And Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.
27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of
Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai
28 the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and
29 barley, and meal, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentils, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and
butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to
eat : for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

18 1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands
2 and captains of hundreds over them. And David sent forth the people, a third part under
the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's
brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the peo-
3 ple, I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth :
for if we flee away, they will not care for us ; neither if half of us die, will they care for us :
but thou art worth ten thousand of us : therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succor
4 us out of the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the
5 king stood by the gate side, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. And
the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young
man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge
6 concerning Absalom. So the people went out into the field against Israel : and the battle
7 was in the forest of Ephraim. And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants
8 of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men. For the
battle was there spread over the face of all the country : and the forest devoured more people
9 that day than the sword devoured. And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David.
And Absalom rode upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak,
and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth ;
10 and the mule that was under him went on. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and
11 said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him,
And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground ? and I
12 would have given thee ten *pieces of silver*, and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though
I should receive a thousand *pieces of silver* in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand
against the king's son : for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying,
13 Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his
life (and there is no matter hid from the king), then thou thyself wouldest have stood aloof.

14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and
 15 thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And
 ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.
 16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel : for Joab
 17 held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the forest,
 18 and raised over him a very great heap of stones : and all Israel fled every one to his tent. Now
 Absalom in his life time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's
 dale : for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance : and he called the pillar
 after his own name : and it is called Absalom's monument, unto this day.

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that
 20 the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not be the
 bearer of tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day : but this day thou shalt
 21 bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. Then said Joab to the Cushite, Go tell the
 22 king what thou hast seen. And the Cushite bowed himself unto Joab, and ran. Then said
 Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But come what may, let me, I pray thee, also run
 after the Cushite. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou wilt have
 23 no reward for the tidings ? But come what may, *said he*, I will run. And he said unto him,
 Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Plain, and overran the Cushite.

24 Now David sat between the two gates : and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate
 25 unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man running alone. And the
 watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his
 26 mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running :
 and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, *another* man running alone. And
 27 the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running
 of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a
 28 good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is
 well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be
 the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord
 29 the king. And the king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom ? And Ahimaaz an-
 swered, When Joab sent the king's servant, even me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I
 30 knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside,
 31 and stood still. And, behold, the Cushite came ; and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord
 32 the king : for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And
 the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom ? And the Cushite an-
 swered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be
 33 as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the
 gate, and wept : and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom !
 would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !

David, warned of danger, crossed the Jordan, and went northward to Mahanaim, Ishbosheth's former capital, among the hills of Gilead. Here at once he raised and organized an army to meet the host of Absalom. An interval occurred during which both armies were gathered, and Absalom's army was transferred across the Jordan to the country of Gilead. Here the battle took place. Joab directed the army of David, with Abishai and Ittai as division leaders, each of whom had been solemnly and publicly charged to "deal gently with Absalom." In the conflict the rebel army was enticed into the wood of Ephraim, and great multitudes were slaughtered—twenty thousand—by "the wood" and by "the sword." By a strange Providence, Absalom himself, while fleeing, was caught from his mule by "thick boughs of a great oak," and

left hanging by the head. Spared by a common soldier from reverence to David's command, notwithstanding that command he was thrust through the heart by Joab and his armor-bearers. His body was afterward taken down, cast into a pit, and covered with "a very great heap of stones." B.

The rebellion under Absalom probably lasted two or three months. For there was time for Absalom to gather and organize a great army from all the tribes. There was time for David to number and grade and officer his broken followers, and to put them under division commanders. There was time to transfer Absalom's army across the Jordan, and for the two armies to pitch in camp in the land of Gilead.

17 : 24-26. Absalom assumed the royal state and was solemnly anointed as king. Joab's



MAP PREPARED FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THIS VOLUME.

office of captain of the host was conferred by him upon Amasa, the son of Ithra by Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, stepdaughter to Jesse, and sister to Zeruiah : he was half-cousin to David, and own cousin to Joab and Abishai. Absalom then crossed the Jordan in pursuit of David, and pitched his camp in Mount Gilead. P. S.

27-29. The district where David now was, "the other side of Jordan," lay far apart from Jerusalem and the more frequented places in the country, and, in all probability, it was but little affected by the arts of Absalom. The inhabitants lay under strong obligations to David ; in former times they had suffered most from their neighbors, Moab, Ammon, and especially Syria ; and now they enjoyed a very different lot, owing to the fact that those powerful nations had been brought under David's rule. It was a fertile district, abounding in all kinds of farm and garden produce, and therefore well adapted to support an army that had no regular means of supply. The people of this district seem to have been friendly to David's cause. The little force that had followed him from Jerusalem would now be largely recruited ; and, even to the outward sense, he would be in a far better condition to receive the assault of Absalom than on the day when he left the city. W. G. B.

David was secure in the fortress of Mahanaim, the ancient Trans-Jordanic sanctuary, which had formerly sheltered the rival house of Saul. Three potentates of that pastoral district came forward at once to his support. Shobi, the son of David's ancient friend Nahash, king of Ammon, perhaps put by David in his brother Hanun's place ; Machir, the son of Ammiel, the former protector of Mephibosheth ; Barzillai, an aged chief of great wealth and influence. Their connection with David's enemies, whether of the house of Saul or of Ammon, was overbalanced by earlier alliances with David, or by their respect for himself personally. They brought, with the profuse liberality of Arabs, the butter, cheese, wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentils, pulse, honey, sheep, with which the forests and pastures of Gilead abounded, and on which the historian dwells as if he had been himself one of "the hungry and weary and thirsty" who had revelled in the delightful stores thus placed before them. *Stanley.*—No sooner is David come to Mahanaim, than Barzillai, Machir, and Shobi refresh him with provisions. Who ever saw any child of God left utterly destitute ? Whosoever be the messenger of our aid, we know whence he comes. Heaven shall want power and earth means, before any of the

household of faith shall want maintenance. *Bp. H.*

18 : 1-4. All the arrangements for the inevitable encounter were made with prudence, while every movement of his opponents seems to have been a blunder. It was wise in David to cross the Jordan and retire into Gilead ; it was wise in him to make Mahanaim his headquarters ; it was wise to divide his army into three parts, because of his inferiority of numbers ; and it was wise to have a wood in the neighborhood of the battle-field, though it could not have been foreseen how this was to bear on the individual on whose behalf the insurrection had taken place. W. G. B.—David prepared to receive the attack with his usual skill. He divided his forces into three bodies, under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai ; and yielding to the people's entreaties, he himself remained to hold out the city in case of a defeat. P. S.

3. The king was prepared to take part in the battle, believing that his presence would be helpful to his men ; but the people would not allow him to run the risk. Aged and somewhat infirm as he seems to have been, wearied with his flight, and weakened with the anxieties of so distressing an occasion, the excitement of the battle might have proved too much for him, even if he had escaped the enemy's sword. Besides, everything depended on him ; if his place were discovered by the enemy, their hottest assault would be directed to it ; and if he should fall, there would be left no cause to fight for. W. G. B.

5. Absalom would have David only smitten, David would have Absalom only spared. What foils are these to each other ! Never was unnatural hatred to a father more strong than in Absalom ; nor was ever natural affection to a child more strong than in David ; each showed how bad it is possible for a child to be to the best of fathers, and how good it is possible for a father to be to the worst of children ; as if it were designed to be a resemblance of man's wickedness toward God, and God's mercy toward man, of which it is hard to say which is more amazing. "*Deal gently,*" says David, "by all means, *with the young man, even with Absalom, for my sake.*" This charge supposes David's strong expectation of success, having a good cause and a good God : he doubts not but Absalom would lie at their mercy, and therefore bids them deal gently with him, spare his life, and reserve him for his judgment. H.

6. We read that the battle took place "in the wood of Ephraim" This could not be a wood in the tribe of Ephraim, for that was on the

other side of Jordan, but a wood in Gilead, that for some reason unknown to us had been called by that name. The whole region is still richly wooded, and among its prominent trees is one called the prickly oak. W. G. B.—All the circumstances are in favor of supposing the battle to have been fought on the eastern side of the Jordan. Absalom marched into Gilead and encamped there; David was at Mahanaim; and there is not the slightest hint that either army crossed the Jordan. It is implied beforehand that the battle would be in the neighborhood of Mahanaim (verse 3). The return of the army to Mahanaim *on the same day* (19 : 2-5), would scarcely have been possible had the battle been fought on the west of the Jordan. These considerations make it all but certain that "the wood of Ephraim" was some part of the great forests of Gilead. The origin of the name can only be conjectured. It may possibly have been derived from the connection of Ephraim with the trans-Jordanic Manasseh, or from some incident, such as the slaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah (Ju. 12 : 6). A. F. K.

7, 8. The God of Hosts, with whom it is all one to save with many or with few, takes part with justice; and lets Israel feel what it is to bear arms for a traitorous usurper. The sword devours twenty thousand of them; and the wood devours more than the sword. *Bp. H.*

9. With Absalom's tragic end the bolt of retribution flew right home. Riding on the royal mule, of which he had robbed his father, he fled from the victorious army of Joab only to be caught in the thick boughs of "the great terebinth,"—caught by "the head," says Scripture; caught, says Josephus, by the flowing locks which had been his crown and pride: and there he was hacked to death by pike and sword. And there we must leave him, an emblem of the fate which sooner or later overtakes all who put their trust in themselves,—in health, in beauty, in strength of will, in any of the natural gifts they have received from a God whom they have forgotten or disobeyed. *Cox.*—There hangs Absalom between heaven and earth, as one that was hated and abandoned both of earth and heaven. As if God meant to prescribe this punishment for traitors, Absalom, Ahithophel, and Judas die all one death. *Bp. H.*—This was a very surprising, unusual thing; it was fit that it should be so, his crime being so monstrous. God will here, as in the case of those other rebels, Dathan and Abiram, *create a new thing*, that it may be understood how much *this man has provoked the Lord* (Nu. 16 : 29, 30). *H.*

When the hour of calamity came to Absalom

it found him alone. Even Saul had his armor-bearer at his side when he fled over Gilboa; but neither armor-bearer nor friend attended Absalom as he fled from the battle of the wood of Ephraim. An hour ago, with thousands eager to obey him, and a throne before him, apparently secure from danger, now he hangs helpless between earth and heaven, with no companion but an evil conscience, and no prospect but the judgment of an offended God. W. G. B.

14, 15. Seizing three darts, Joab rushes to the place and thrusts them through Absalom's heart. And his ten armor-bearers finish the business with their swords. We need not suppose that he was altogether indifferent to the feelings of David; but he may have been seized by an overwhelming conviction that Absalom's death was the only effectual way of ending this most guilty and pernicious insurrection, and so preserving the country from ruin. Absalom living, whether banished or imprisoned, would be a constant and fearful danger. Absalom dead, great though the king's distress for the time might be, would be the very salvation of the country. W. G. B.—There was probably a true regard for the king and kingdom in this act of Joab. He knew that Absalom could not with safety be suffered to live; and that now a just right to slay him had been earned in open battle. Nothing can be alleged against him in this matter but his disobedience to the king: but he, in his position, felt that he dared to disobey him for his own good; and he was quite prepared to vindicate and maintain this deed. As Joab had been on good terms with Absalom, and had taken pains to bring about a reconciliation between him and his father, we may set the higher value upon his firm adhesion to David when Absalom revolted, and upon his stern sense of duty to the king—from whom he expected no thanks—displayed in putting an end to the war by the slaughter of his favorite son, when all others shrunk from the responsibility of doing the king a service against his own will. *Kit.*

16. Joab, hereupon, sounds a retreat; the danger is over now that Absalom is slain; the people will soon return to their allegiance to David, and therefore no more blood shall be spilt; no prisoners are taken, to be tried as traitors and made examples: let every man return to his tent; they are all the king's subjects, all his good subjects again.

17, 18. His body is cast into a great pit in the wood; they would not bring it to his father (for that would but have added to his grief), nor would they preserve it to be buried, according

to his order, but threw it into the next pit with indignation. Now where is the beauty he had been so proud of and for which he had been so much admired? Where are his aspiring projects? His thoughts perish, and he with them. And, to signify how heavy *his iniquity lay upon his bones*, as the prophet speaks (Ez. 32 : 27), they raised a *great heap of stones upon him*, to be a monument of his villainy, and to signify that he ought to have been stoned as a rebellious son (De. 21 : 21). Travellers say that the place is taken notice of to this day, and that it is common for passengers to throw a stone to this heap, with words to this purport : *Cursed be the memory of rebellious Absalom, and cursed forever be all wicked children that rise up in rebellion against their parents*. To aggravate the ignominy of Absalom's burial, the historian takes notice of a pillar he had erected in the valley of Kidron, near Jerusalem, to be a monument for himself, and keep his name in remembrance, at the foot of which, it is probable, he designed to be buried. His care was to have his name kept in remembrance, and it is so to his everlasting dishonor. The pillar shall bear his name, but not to his credit ; it was designed for Absalom's glory, but proved Absalom's folly. H.

Self-seekers are self-losers and self-destroyers. Absalom and Judas seek themselves, and hang themselves. Saul seeks himself, and kills himself. Haman sought himself, and lost himself. That which self-seekers think should be a staff to support them, becomes, by the hand of justice, an iron rod to break them ; that which they would have as springs to refresh them becomes a gulf utterly to destroy them. *T. Brooks.*

19-23 Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, who had brought the news from Hushai, was present, and wished to carry this news to David. Joab preferred a blunter Cushite or Ethiopian slave, but after he had gone, he permitted Ahimaaz to follow. *Knox.*

24-27. *David, at the gate of Mahanaim, awaits tidings of the battle.* We can almost see the anxious, sad-hearted king, and hear his colloquy with the watchman on the top of the outer tower, so graphic is the narrative. Between the two main gates of the double-walled city, in a court used as a place of public resort, for the administration of justice, or for audience with kings or governors, David has been long sitting anxiously awaiting intelligence, with heart burdened most of all by his concern for the fate of Absalom. One man is seen running, and then another, toward the gate. Then the watchman reports the foremost to be Ahimaaz, from which the king infers the tidings to be good.

28-30. *The report of Ahimaaz, and his avoidance of David's question concerning Absalom.* "All is well!" he calls aloud before reaching the king. Then reverently bowing, he devoutly declares that God had destroyed the rebellious host. But David has no heart to join in the praise to which the words of Ahimaaz designedly turn his thought. He forgets his endangered and now delivered throne. He is insensible even to the Divine goodness which has interposed to restore his kingdom. All his thought is upon Absalom, all his heart goes out in yearning to know the safety of this relentless, parricidal son. "*Is the young man Absalom safe?*" And when Ahimaaz, respecting his grief, again seeks further to prepare his mind for the news, by a general reference to some great scene of confusion or catastrophe, he is bidden to stand aside.

31, 32. *The tidings of Cushie, and his announcement of Absalom's death.* In explicit language, he bluntly declares that "the Lord hath avenged the king" of all his enemies. And when the one question upon the king's heart springs to his lips, the Ethiopian answers as bluntly, "The enemies of my lord the king be as that young man!" There is no description of his fate, no aggravation of the king's feelings by telling the fearful manner of his destruction ; but simply, *he can no more "rise against thee to do thee hurt"*—he is dead! There is no doubt on the king's mind, no hope upon which to propose a further question. Absalom is dead!

33. Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! Strange depth and intensity of affection for one who had scarce any other recommendation save personal beauty, who had not a single excellence ; whose whole career had been one of relentless cruelty and monstrous enormities! And yet, knowing David's history, we cannot but find in these words some feeling deeper and more intense, which was only quickened and aggravated by his strong natural affection. That which made it so overwhelming and unparalleled was the enormous weight of self-reproach thrown back upon his heart by the memories of paternal neglect, and of his own terrible sins. His beautiful but corrupt son, foolishly indulged, was now lost forever in his unrepented guilt! God's predicted chastisement upon himself, now fallen upon this object of his strongest affection, crushed his heart with fearful force of anguish! Had he only been faithful and pure, it would not have been thus. Reason enough then, for his wild, agonizing lament! Cause enough for that wailing cry that has sounded down the centuries, "*Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son!*" B.

The elements of David's intense agony were mainly three. There was the loss of his son, whom with all his faults he loved still. There was the terrible fact that Absalom had died in rebellion, without expressing one word of regret, without one request for forgiveness, without one act or word that it would be pleasant to recall in time to come, as a foil to the bitterness caused by his unnatural rebellion. And there was the fact that in this rebellious condition he had passed to the judgment of God. What hope could there be for him? W. G. B.

David professes to desire that he had died for Absalom, but that was a vain wish. He ought to have lived more for Absalom. I. T.—The whole scene of David's lamentation over Absalom speaks with an immediate and awful voice to parents, and urges them to make the training and commanding of their children earnest work, and especially to beware of looking tenderly upon their disobedience, or of only feebly and hesitatingly restraining them in their wickedness. Not a little of the foolish indulgence which parents show to their children is the simple effect of an aversion to be troubled, and is, therefore, with all its look of amiable, but fatal weakness, just "self-indulgence under an alias." Much of it also is affection grievously misdirected, the fruit of simple unwillingness to give present pain. Thomson.

There are many Absaloms in the world who despise parental authority, jeer at all proper and needful advice, give heed to the poisoned whispers of the worst of companions, cause aching hearts and tearful eyes in the old house at home, and at last run riot to their hearts' content, but to their souls' utter damnation. H. C. Nunn.—Let those who have begun to spurn parental authority and to laugh at the remonstrances of a father, read in the career and end of Absalom in what direction and to what certain issues their course is leading them. The growing wickedness of this favorite son brought him to an untimely grave, dimmed to his father's vision even the glories of the everlasting covenant, and made him descend to his royal sepulchre mourning that "his house was not so with God." Thomson.

Other suggestions of truth and duty that will repay our thought.

1. In Absalom were united a beautiful person and a monstrously deformed soul. His beauty of person was (and it always is) a double temptation and snare to parent and child. In the one, it leads to an infatuation of excessive indulgence. In the child and the youth, it stimulates natural vanity, pride, and self-seeking ;

and to gratify these, prompts to every form of accessible sin. As signally illustrating and sharply pointing this double warning, bear in mind that so monstrous a character as Absalom's is not found elsewhere in the Scripture. It is scarcely paralleled in profane history. Without natural affection, with an amazing hardness of heart and relentlessness of hate, yet vain-glorious, prodigal, seductive, and hypocritical in word and deed, a deliberate fratricide, a traitor against an indulgent father, for years at heart a parricide—all this was the outcome of his misuse of God's manifold and special gifts, and of parental neglect and infatuation.

2. The consequences of such a career do but add depth and force to this double warning. The end of a character so monstrous is plainly set forth in the inspired proverb: "*He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death*" Not merely as elsewhere declared, "Evil pursueth sinners," "Be sure your sin will find you out," but *the wilful transgressor punishes himself*. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, he shall die without instruction."

3. In contrast with the parental neglect of David and the unfilial disobedience of Absalom, are here forcibly commended, on the one hand parental fidelity in restraint and example, and on the other, a filial spirit of affectionate obedience. Where there is mutually responsive truth, affection, and faithfulness, the family becomes, as ordained of God, the best and surest of human agencies for the right development of character, and for the greatest helpfulness and happiness in living.

4. Very suggestive, further, is the fact that, though Absalom had no relents toward the father who loved him, David had no resentment, only a deeper affection toward the son who hated and would destroy him. In this, at least, like God in his love to sinners, and like Christ in his willingness to die for enemies. With all that was earthly in his feeling, he yet came nearer than any earthly being ever came to the illustration of that love by which "God commendeth himself to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." From David's imperfect example of willing love, let us turn to the love that died upon the cross for us!

5. *Is it well with the young man?* Touching, tender question of affection! How many and varied its applications! Every true heart for some other heart must cherish the spirit which prompts it. Let the earnest prayer, the consistent example, and the loving word daily respond to this spirit of yearning desire for *our child, our friend, our life-companion!* B.

Section 274.

INCIDENTS PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING DAVID'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM.

2 SAMUEL 19 : 1-40.

- 19 1 AND it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.
 2 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people : for the people heard
 3 say that day, The king grieveth for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day into
 4 the city, as people that are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. And the king covered
 his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son !
 5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of
 all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy
 6 daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines ; in that thou lovest them
 that hate thee, and hatest them that love thee. For thou hast declared this day, that princes
 and servants are nought unto thee : for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all
 7 we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak
 comfortably unto thy servants : for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not
 tarry a man with thee this night : and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that hath
 8 befallen thee from thy youth until now. Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they
 told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate : and all the people came
 before the king.
- 9 Now Israel had fled every man to his tent. And all the people were at strife throughout all
 the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he
 saved us out of the hand of the Philistines ; and now he is fled out of the land from Absalom.
 10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not
 a word of bringing the king back ?
- 11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of
 Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house ? seeing the speech of all
 12 Israel is come to the king, *to bring him* to his house. Ye are my brethren, ye are my bone and
 13 my flesh : wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king ? And say ye to Amasa, Art
 thou not my bone and my flesh ? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the
 14 host before me continually in the room of Joab. And he bowed the heart of all the men of
 Judah, even as *the heart of one man* ; so that they sent unto the king, *saying*, Return thou, and
 15 all thy servants. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to
 go to meet the king, to bring the king over Jordan.
- 16 And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down
 17 with the men of Judah to meet king David. And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with
 him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants
 18 with him ; and they went through Jordan in the presence of the king. And there went over a
 ferry boat to bring over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei
 19 the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he was come over Jordan. And he said unto
 the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy
 servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should
 20 take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned : therefore, behold, I am
 21 come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. But
 Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, be-
 22 cause he cursed the LORD's anointed ? And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons
 of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me ? shall there any man be put to
 23 death this day in Israel ? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel ? And the
 king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.
- 24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king ; and he had neither dressed
 his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until
 25 the day he came home in peace. And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to
 meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentst not thou with me, Mephibosheth ?

- 26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me : for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go with the king ; because thy servant is lame.
- 27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king ; but my lord the king is as an
- 28 angel of God : do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king : yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet that I should cry any more unto the king ?
- 29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters ? I say, Thou and
- 30 Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come in peace unto his own house.
- 31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim ; and he went over Jordan with the
- 32 king, to conduct him over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old : and he had provided the king with sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim ; for he was a
- 33 very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will sustain thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, How many are the days of the
- 34 years of my life, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem ? I am this day fourscore years old : can I discern between good and bad ? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink ? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ? wherefore then
- 35 should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king ? Thy servant would but just go over Jordan with the king : and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward ?
- 36 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold, thy servant Chimham ; let him go over with my lord
- 37 the king ; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee. And all the people went over Jordan, and the king went over : and the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and he returned unto his own place.
- 38
- 39
- 40 So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went over with him : and all the people of Judah brought the king over, and also half the people of Israel.

1-39. The army, though flushed with victory, stole off like conscious malefactors on hearing of the king's grief at the death of Absalom. It marks the power of that great moral ascendancy which the king had over their spirits ; yet was he forced to succumb when their rough but resolute commander interposed and compelled the monarch to show himself. One wonders not that he should have meditated to supersede Joab by making Amasa the general-in-chief of the forces. The effect of the victory over the tribes of Israel is perfectly in keeping, too, with human nature, and so is the preference of David for being invited first by the men of Judah, as well as the consequent jealousy that broke out in fierce invective between the two great divisions of the nation over which David ruled. We further read of the mighty hold which David had over the hearts of those of his own tribe. This return of the king was followed up by a speedy, but withal most natural reaction on the part of those who had deserted or spitefully treated him in the day of his adversity—among these Shimei makes just the appearance that we should have expected, while the noble reply of David to the suggestion of Abishai carries in it the expression of his antipathy to these coarse and resolute, and withal able and influential

men, the sons of Zeruiah. We scarcely know how to account for the king's award in the case of Mephibosheth, of whom, we might think, he must have entertained some lurking suspicion that he divided his property with the servant who had reported against him. But all is genial and right, and perfectly beautiful in the final settlement which took place between David and Barzillai, wherein the virtues of gratitude and devoted loyalty are so conspicuously blended. T. C.

1-7. The grief of David was as immoderate as it was unseasonable, and showed the intemperate, passionate affection he bore to the unnatural and impious youth. It damped the common joy of his friends and soldiers for the glorious victory, to hear the excessive grief he expressed for his son, insomuch that they almost repented of their success, and stole into the city where David was, as if they had been dishonorably defeated. *Chandler.*—It was a rash and unadvised utterance of affection. But for the rough faithfulness of Joab, the consequences would have been disastrous. "The victory that day was turned into mourning, for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son." Every one was discouraged. The man for whom they had risked their

lives had not a word of thanks to any of them, and could think of no one but that vile son of his, who was now dead. In the evening Joab came to him, and in his blunt way swore to him that if he was not more affable to the people they would not remain a night longer in his service. W. G. B.

The crisis illustrates the good as well as the bad features of Joab's character—his loyalty to David and his practical sagacity, as well as his hard, unsympathetic nature. Exaggerated and unfeeling as his speech was, it roused David from the extravagance of his grief to a sense of his duty, and saved him from flinging away the fruits of the victory. A. F. K.—Joab magnifies the services of David's soldiers: "*This day they have saved thy life, and therefore deserve to be taken notice of, and have reason to resent it if they be not.*" It is implied that Absalom, whom he honored with his tears, sought his ruin and the ruin of his family; while those whom by his tears he puts a slight upon, were such as preserved from ruin him and all that was dear to him. He aggravates the discouragement David had given them: "*Thou hast shamed their faces, for while they have shown such a value for thy life, thou hast shown no value for theirs, but preferrest a false traitor to his king and country before all thy wise counsellors, brave commanders, and loyal subjects.*" He advises him to present himself immediately at the head of his troops, to welcome them home, congratulate their successes, and return them thanks for their services. He threatens him with another rebellion if he would not do this, intimating that, rather than serve so ungrateful a prince, he himself would head a revolt from him, and then "*There will not tarry with thee one man.*" H.

8. David felt the call of duty—"He arose and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate! And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent." And very touching it must have been to look on the sad, pale, wasted face of the king, and mark his humble, chastened bearing, and yet to receive from him words of winning kindness that showed him still caring for them and loving them, as a shepherd among his sheep; in no wise exasperated by the insurrection, not breathing forth threatenings and slaughter on those who had taken part against him; but concerned as ever for the welfare of the whole kingdom. W. G. B.

9-15. David, now victorious over a rebel army, had it in his power to take ample revenge on all those whose treachery and bad faith well deserved to be chastised; and if he had pos-

sessed any malicious or sanguinary feelings, he could now want no pretext for indulging them. But he was governed by very different principles: he knew his son's rebellion to be the effect of his own guilt, and his recent success to be the fruit of his penitence and humiliation before God; he therefore was moved to no other conduct than prayer and repentance, gratitude and thanksgiving, and a patient, humble expectation of God's disposal of the event. Nor did he fail of his reward: for it seemed good to the great Governor of the world to turn the hearts of David's subjects in his favor; insomuch that they now returned to their duty with as much zeal as they had but a few days before rushed into rebellion against him. Delaney.

It is strange that David did not immediately, upon the defeat and dispersion of Absalom's forces, march with all expedition back to Jerusalem to regain the possession of his capital city while the rebels were all in confusion, and before they could rally again. What occasion was there to bring him back? Could not he himself go back with the victorious army he had with him in Gilead? He could, no doubt; but he would come back as a prince, with the consent and unanimous approbation of the people, and not as a conqueror forcing his way. He would come back in peace and safety, and be sure that he should meet with no difficulty or opposition in his return; and therefore would be satisfied that the people were well affected to him before he would stir. He would come back in honor, and like himself; and therefore would come back, not at the head of his forces, but in the arms of his subjects. II.

The facility with which Absalom had been hailed as king at Hebron, and been joined by such numbers as enabled him to move at once upon Jerusalem, might well justify David in suspecting that the procrastination of the Judahites arose from some disinclination to receive him. The step he did take is, however, of questionable discretion. There was great danger in adopting a course which might indicate to the other tribes that he took a separate interest in Judah; as it was too well remembered that he belonged to it, and that it had for some years been his separate kingdom. He, however, recognized their tribal interest in him by treating with them separately. He sent the two high-priests to incite them to hasten to escort him home, and not to be the last in the general movement. They did so. Though the last to call him, they were the first to escort him; and when they sent to conduct him home, he at once moved forward, without waiting till the other

and more distant tribes arrived to take part in this great public act. The dangerous impolicy of this is apparent. The least he could have done was to have waited until the other tribes arrived to concur in this procedure. *Kit.*

13. Amasa was David's nephew, the son of his sister or stepsister Abigail. Of course the message was to be privately conveyed to Amasa through the priests. It was a bold stroke of policy to promise the post of commander-in-chief to the general of the rebel army. By so doing, David designed at once to secure the allegiance of that army, and to punish Joab for killing Absalom in defiance of his command. But it was hardly prudent. Joab was certain not to submit to it tamely; Amasa's military skill was probably inferior, and his loyalty remained to be proved. A. F. K.—Much better would it have been for him to have undertaken the chief duties of Joab's office himself. But the appointment of Amasa was unwise. A beaten rebel was not a leader whom the troops of David would follow. In eagerness to degrade Joab, the king was degrading himself and his soldiers. *Sime.*

14. "He bowed the heart of the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants." From the extreme of backwardness they started to the extreme of forwardness; the last to speak for David, they were the first to act for him; and such was their vehemence in his cause that the evil of national disunion which David dreaded from their indifference actually sprang from their over-impetuous zeal.

15. Thus at length David bade farewell to Mahanaim, and began his journey to Jerusalem. His route in returning was the reverse of that followed in his flight. First he descends the eastern bank of the Jordan as far as opposite Gilgal; then he strikes up through the wilderness the steep ascent to Jerusalem. At Gilgal several events of interest took place. W. G. B.

16-23. A great surprise met David as soon as he had crossed the Jordan on his return. The first to meet him, to proffer his allegiance and devotion, was that very Shimei who had so bitterly insulted him on his mournful retreat from Jerusalem! He fell at the king's feet, confessed his error, and pleaded for pardon on the ground of his contrition, and of his being the first of the tribe of Benjamin to come forward on this happy occasion. This was important; for he came at the head of a thousand men of the same tribe, all probably, like himself, warm partisans of the house of Saul, and whom he seems to have induced to take part with him in this de-

cided act of adhesion. An appeal thus made could not be resisted; and, besides, David was, both from policy and inclination, in a forgiving temper, and felt that it would ill become him at such a time to avenge or remember former wrongs. *Kit.*—His experience of God's mercy in restoring him to his kingdom, his exclusion from which he attributed to his sin, inclined him to show mercy to Shimei. They that are forgiven, must forgive. David had severely revenged the abuses done to his ambassadors by the Ammonites, but easily passes by the abuse done to himself by an Israelite. That was an affront to Israel and touched the honor of his crown and kingdom; this was purely personal, and, therefore (according to the usual disposition of good men), he could the more easily forgive it. If he should put Shimei to death, who cursed him, they would expect the same fate who had taken up arms and actually levied war against him, which would drive them from him while he was endeavoring to draw them to him. Acts of severity are seldom acts of policy: *The throne is established by mercy.* Shimei hereupon has his pardon signed and sealed with an oath; yet bound to his good behavior and liable to be prosecuted if he afterward misbehaved; and thus he was reserved to be, in due time, as much a monument of the justice of the government, as he was now of its clemency, and in both of its prudence. H.

24-30. If the reading is right, the meeting between David and Mephibosheth must have taken place in Jerusalem, and is introduced here out of the strictly chronological order, because of the mention of Ziba in verse 17. "Came down" in verse 24 must then be explained "came down from his house in the highlands of Benjamin near Gibeah to Jerusalem," not "came down from Jerusalem to the Jordan." The conclusion of verse 30 agrees with the supposition that Mephibosheth met David in Jerusalem. A. F. K.

When the king asked him, why he, being one of his family, had stayed behind, and not accompanied him in his exile, he opened his case fully to the king. He complains of Ziba, his servant, who had hindered him from going along with the king, by taking the ass himself, which he was ordered to make ready for his master (verse 26), basely taking advantage of his lameness, and his inability to help himself; and had accused him to David of a design to usurp the government (verse 27). He gratefully acknowledges the king's great kindness to himself, when he and all his father's house lay at the king's mercy (verse 28). When he might justly

have been dealt with as a rebel, he was treated as a friend, as a child : *Thou didst set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table.* This shows that Ziba's suggestion was improbable ; for could Mephibosheth be so disingenuous as to design any harm to David, of whose great kindness to him he was thus sensible ? He refers himself to the king's pleasure, *Do what is good in thine eyes* with me and my estate ; depending on the king's wisdom, and his ability to discern between truth and falsehood ; *My lord the king is as an angel of God* · and disclaiming all pretensions of his own merit ; “ So much kindness I have received above what I deserved, and what right have I to cry any more unto the king ? Why should I trouble the king with my complaints, who have already been so troublesome to him ? ”

David hereupon recalls the sequestration of Mephibosheth's estate ; being deceived in his grant, he revokes it, and confirms his former settlement of it ; *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land* (verse 20) ; that is, “ Let it be as I first ordered it (ch. 9 : 10) ; the property shall still be vested in thee, but Ziba shall have the occupancy, he shall till the land, paying thee a rent.”

Thus Mephibosheth is where he was, no harm is done, only Ziba goes away unpunished for his false and malicious information against his master. H.—That David did not disbelieve his story is shown by his revoking the judgment he had previously given. That he did not entirely reverse his decision, but allowed Ziba to retain possession of half the lands of Mephibosheth, is probably due partly to weariness at the whole transaction, but mainly to the conciliatory frame of mind in which he was at that moment. “ Shall there any man be put to death this day ? ” is the key-note of the whole proceeding. *Dis. B.*

The only writer who attempts the justification of David's apparent neglect and injustice toward Mephibosheth is Blunt (“ Undesigned Coincidences,” pp. 167–171). His statement will, however, be scarcely deemed adequate for the king's defence, as it turns upon the supposed independence of Jonathan's son in his personal character and conduct. This seems to be controverted by the whole story of the man and of his relations with Ziba. *B.*

30. The tone of the afflicted man's reply gives us reason to fear that the worst interpretation of David's decision may be the right one—“ Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.” Oh, noble heart ! Let us fain hope that David was touched by this loyally devoted reply. *Kit.*

31–39. David had already graced the tri-

umphs of his restoration with the generous remission of the injuries that had been done him ; we have him here gracing them with the no less generous reward of the kindnesses that had been shown him. Barzillai, the Gileadite, who had a noble seat at Rogelim, not far from Mahanaim, was the man who, of all the nobility of that country, had been most kind to David in his distress. H.—The good old blind chief Barzillai went to the Jordan with the king, and took leave of him when he was about to cross the river. David pressed him to proceed with him to Jerusalem, and remain there with him, that he might have the opportunity of manifesting his gratitude for the great and costly services he had rendered. But the prospect of a life at court had no charms for this great pastoral chief. There is something very touching in his words. “ I am this day fourscore years old : and can I discern between good and evil ? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink ? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ? wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden to my lord the king ? ” He would, he said, go a little way beyond the Jordan with the king ; but he added, “ Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother.” This touch is affecting, and true to universal nature—but particularly to Oriental nature. The tendency of our civilization is to put us above—or perhaps below—these things. *Kit.*—Contenting himself with escorting David a little beyond the Jordan, he left his son Chimham to receive the favors which he himself was too old to enjoy ; and one of David's last acts was to commend the family to the generosity of Solomon. *P. S.*

Thus begins, and thus ends the history of Chimham ; he passes away from the scene, and what David did for him, beyond providing him a place at his table, and recommending him, in common with many others, to Solomon before he died, does not appear. Singular, however, it is, and if ever there was a coincidence which carried with it the stamp of truth, it is this, that in the forty-first chapter of Jeremiah, we read that the Jews, apprehending the vengeance of the Chaldeans, prepared for a flight into Egypt, so “ they departed,” the narrative continues, “ and dwelt in the habitation of *Chimham*, which is by *Bethlehem*, to go to enter into Egypt ” (verse 17). It is impossible to imagine anything more incidental than the mention of this estate near *Bethlehem*, which was the habitation of *Chimham*—yet how well does it tally with the spirit of David's speech to Barzillai, some four hundred

years before ! for what can be more probable than that David, whose birthplace was this very *Bethlehem*, and whose patrimony in consequence lay there, having undertaken to provide for Chimham, should have bestowed it as the most flattering reward he could confer, a personal as well as a royal mark of favor, on the son of the man who had saved his life and the lives of his followers in the hour of their distress ; and that to that very day when Jeremiah wrote, it should have remained in the possession of the family of Chimham, and have been a land called after his own name ? *Blunt.*

Barzillai never dreamed of being paid for what he did to David, "The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness," was the only consideration which prompted the deed. True sympathy needs only the sight of misery and distress, activity instantaneously will follow. Thank Heaven, there is a large and noble army of self-sacrificing men and women battling bravely every day with the enemy in the courts and alleys of our cities and large towns, who have not the remotest idea of having their names trumpeted before men ; neither have they ever dreamed of being invited to a king's table. They do it from love to the great King. *An.*

We have, in Barzillai, a man who knows that he is old, but who is not distressed by the thought of it. There are old men who do not know that they are old, or who seek to suppress their knowledge of it. Few things in the world are so pleasant as the sight of such a conscious, cheerful, hopeful old age as that of Barzillai, certain that it has not long to stay, but interested to the last in the best things of life, in the cause of God and man and country and Church. We must prepare for such an old age as this : by taking God with us early in the journey of life ; by providing beforehand the compensations which God is willing to give for everything that may be taken away by the changes of life. In Barzillai, we have, further, a man of long experience, who has kept up his love of simple pleasures. We can infer this from the tone in which he speaks. He had reached an age when the love of sensational things fails in all but the most frivolous, yet the way in which he speaks of them puts them quietly aside, as not to his taste and never likely to have been so. It is not a dream that man can keep the love of natural things in his heart and can call them up in fancy

as he reads. If a man will but read his Bible with a fresh heart, he may walk with patriarchs in the world when it was young and green, may rest with Abraham under the shade of the oak of Mamre, and see the upspringing of the well to which the princes of Israel sang. He may sit on the mountain-top with Christ, among the lilies and the birds, to understand what they say and sing, and he may listen till he hears far off the final hymn which shall be a concert of nature round regenerated man. And, in Barzillai, we have a man who is attached to the past, but who does not distrust the future. For himself he has grown up in the old way, and cannot change, but he thinks, "The new has its rights, and the world will be on. My son is here ; the future is beaming in his face and beating in his heart ; I give him into hands I can trust for leading him in the way of truth, of righteousness." If the old can thus pass over into the new, there is security in all changes. *Ker.*

Barzillai's question, "How many are the days of the years of my life," presents to all, at every period of being, a *seasonable* inquiry, the earnest consideration of which might, perhaps, prevent much evil and promote much good. There is no more costly treasure than the season of life, which by so many is dreamed away and sported away ; the larger the portion of this treasure that has escaped us, the higher rises the value of the relatively small amount of it remaining. It is related of the ancient Sibylline books, that the prince to whom they were offered for sale thought the price asked too high ; some of them were then burned, but the same price was demanded ; yet again the same act was repeated, with the same result ; finally, the volumes still remaining were purchased for the price demanded for the whole at first. So is it with our days ; the article rises in value as it becomes more scarce. What high significance then attaches to the question of Barzillai in the ceaseless flight of years, and how much reason have the old, especially, to think and choose like him ! He who expects nothing for himself in eternity, closes his ear to the ceaseless rustle of the wings of time ; and he who in old age desires his heaven on earth, dream not, like Barzillai, of the still grave, his mother. But to the believing Christian, the older he is the nearer is he to blessed rest, and to the glorious contemplation of "the King in His beauty" in the New Jerusalem, where they reckon not by years. *Van O.*

Section 275.

JUDAH REPROACHED BY THE TEN TRIBES. REBELLION OF THE LATTER UNDER SHEBA. AMASA MURDERED BY JOAB. SHEBA'S FORCE DISPERSED BY JOAB. SHEBA SLAIN IN ABEL.

2 SAMUEL 19 : 41-43 ; 20 : 1-26.

19 41 AND, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king, and his household, over Jordan, and all David's men with him? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, because the king is near of kin to us : wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye : why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

20 1 And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite : and he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse : every man to his tents, O Israel. So all the men of Israel went up from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri : but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem ; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and provided them with sustenance, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be 5 thou here present. So Amasa went to call *the men of* Judah together : but he tarried longer 6 than the set time which he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom : take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue 7 after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape out of our sight. And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men : and they 8 went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in 9 the sheath thereof ; and as he went forth it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, Is it well with thee, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand : so he smote him therewith in the belly, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again ; and he died. And 11 Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. And there stood by him one of Joab's young men, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him 12 follow Joab. And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of the high way. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the high way into the field, 13 and cast a garment over him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the high way, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba 14 the son of Bichri. And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maacah, 15 and all the Berites : and they were gathered together, and went also after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah, and they cast up a mount against the city, and it stood against the rampart : and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to 16 throw it down. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear ; say, I pray you, unto 17 Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And he came near unto her ; and the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am. Then she said unto him, Hear the 18 words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel : and so they ended *the* 19 *matter*. I am of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel : thou seekest to destroy a city

20 and a mother in Israel : why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD? And Joab
21 answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The
matter is not so : but a man of the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name,
hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David ; deliver him only, and I will
depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to
22 thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut
off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet,
and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem
unto the king.

23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel : and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the
24 Cherethites and over the Pelethites ; and Adoram was over the tribute : and Jehoshaphat the
25 son of Ahilud was the recorder : and Sheva was scribe : and Zadok and Abiathar were priests :
26 and Ira also the Jairite was priest unto David.

19 : 41-43. The northern tribes had been foremost in proposing the restoration (verses 9, 10), but owing no doubt to tribal jealousies, they had not been invited by the men of Judah to the gathering at Gilgal to welcome the king. Consequently, only a fraction of them, probably those from the immediate neighborhood and the trans-Jordanic country, were there. But while the king was still at Gilgal, the rest of the Israelite representatives arrived, and complained to David that they had been unwarrantably forestalled by Judah, and cheated of the honor and privilege of escorting him back. A. F. K.—When the other tribes came to conduct the king home, they were affronted to find that they had been anticipated, and that Judah alone had assumed the right and honor of bringing the king back. There then arose a hot contention between Israel and Judah. The former contended, with reason, that as they “ had ten parts in the king,” and Judah but one, the latter had taken too much upon it in bringing the king back upon its own authority ; in reply to which the Judahites used the argument, dangerous for David’s house, but which his own part in the matter had distinctly sanctioned, that they had a right to act as they had done, because the king was peculiarly their own—“ was near of kin to them.” The argument of the Judahites was not calculated to conciliate the ten tribes ; and there can be no doubt that the king himself incurred a share in their displeasure for the part he had taken in this matter, for it was certainly on his invitation that the men of Judah had acted. Here, as Chalmers aptly describes it, “ was a ferment that broke out at a future day.” Even now this feeling on the part of Israel “ came to a formidable eruption.”

20 : 1, 2. Among the watchers of events was one Sheba, the son of Bichri, who, perceiving the disgust of the ten tribes at the arrogance of the men of Judah, thought that the contention of the other tribes for ten parts in David, might

easily be turned into a disavowal of any part in him. He therefore raised the seditious cry, “ We have *no part* in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse : every man to his tents, O Israel.” This cry, in the present state of feeling, acted like magic. Nearly all the men of Israel left the king to the Judahites, and he was by them escorted from the Jordan to Jerusalem. *Kil.*—The ringleader of this rebellion was Sheba, a Benjamite by birth (verse 1), who had his habitation in Mount Ephraim (verse 21). Shimei and he were both of Saul’s tribe, and both retained the ancient grudge of that house.

4-6. Amasa is sent to assemble the men of Judah within three days ; but he cannot do it within the time appointed. Upon Amasa’s delay, Abishai, the brother of Joab, is ordered to take the guards and standing forces, and with them to pursue Sheba without delay. Joab, without orders, goes along with his brother. H.

7. Abishai took “ Joab’s men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men.” With these he went out from Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba. How Joab conducted himself on this occasion is a strange but characteristic chapter of his history. It does not appear that he had any dealings with David, or that David had any dealings with him. He simply went out with his brother, and, being a man of the strongest will and greatest daring, he seems to have resolved on some fit occasion to resume his command in spite of all the king’s arrangements. W. G. B.

8-11. This description of Joab’s dress (verse 8) is intended to explain how he contrived to stab Amasa without his design being suspected. In the girdle which he wore over his military dress was stuck a dagger. As he met Amasa he contrived to let this fall out of its sheath on the ground. He picked it up in his left hand, and the movement being apparently purely accidental, excited no alarm in Amasa’s mind. A. F. K.—Joab so contrived that his sword

should fall out of its sheath to the ground, as he drew near to him. Snatching it hastily up, without pausing to sheath it, in the polite zeal of his attention to Amasa, he took hold of his beard, to impress upon it the kiss of affectionate respect, saying, "Art thou in health, my brother?" and as the words passed his lips, and the beard was in his hand, he buried the naked sword in the body of Amasa, under the fifth rib. This was almost exactly as he had before dealt with Abner, and from almost the same motives. This, however, is by much the more villainous act of the two, seeing that it stood more entirely on the ground of personal objects. In Abner's case he had the excuse, at least, of vengeance for a brother's blood, as well as of a real or pretended belief that Abner designed to betray David. But here there was nakedly nothing but the desire to fling a formidable rival from his path. One knows not whether most to be astonished at the atrocity or the hardihood of the deed. It was no less than the murder of a general at the head of his troops. But Joab knew his own influence. One near him cried, "He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him follow Joab." And such was the power of that name, and the wonderful ascendancy the owner of it had acquired over the troops, that the men of Amasa forthwith joined the others in following Joab in pursuit of Sheba. *Kit.*

Joab did it in contempt and defiance of David, and the commission he had given to Amasa; for that commission was the only ground of his quarrel with him, so that David was struck at through Amasa. He did it very unseasonably, when they were going against a common enemy and were concerned to be unanimous. This ill-timed quarrel might have scattered their forces or engaged them one against another. Joab immediately resumes his general's place, and takes care to lead the army on in pursuit of Sheba, that he might prevent any prejudice to the common cause by what he had done. He leaves one of his men to make proclamation to the forces that were coming up, that they were still engaged in David's cause, but under Joab's command. He knew what an interest he had in the soldiery, and how many favored him, rather than Amasa, that had been a traitor, was now a turncoat, and had never been successful; on this he boldly relied, and called them all to follow him. *H.*

14. Joab was of great practical service, and prosecuted with great energy this new war, till he at length put an end to it. Such was his influence or the terror of his name, that though it was said of Sheba that every man of Israel went

up and followed him, it is now said of Joab that all the tribes of Israel went also after him. It would appear from his speech before Abel (verse 20) that at this time the pacific, which was certainly the wise policy, was uppermost with Joab—the desirable thing being to consolidate and harmonize Israel. Altogether, he appears to have been able in conduct and counsel as well as in war. *T. C.*

15. Abel. On the right or western bank of the Hasbany, near the foot of the hills, there is a curious isolated hill on which stands the modern village of Abil; traces of old foundations and buildings can still be seen on the mound, the remains of Abel of Beth-Maachah, where Sheba, the son of Bichri, was besieged by Joab. A mound had been cast up against the city, and "it stood in the trench," when the remarkable scene occurred which is here described, ending in the killing of Sheba, whose head was cast out of the city to Joab. *Wilson.*

16-19. This wise woman with no less prudence than courage challengeth Joab for the violence of his assault; and lays to him that law which he could not be an Israelite and disavow; the law of the God of peace, whose charge it was that when they should come near to a city to fight against it they should offer it peace; and if this tender must be made to foreigners, how much more to brethren! *Bp. H.*—The inhabitants were generally peaceable and faithful in Israel. She could speak for all that they were of known fidelity to their prince and peaceableness with their fellow-subjects; neither seditious, nor litigious. It was a part of *the inheritance of the Lord*, a city of *Israelites* not of *heathen*; and the destruction of it would lessen and weaken that nation which God had chosen for his heritage. *H.*

20. Joab was a man of blood; yet when the wise woman of Abel charged him with going about to destroy a mother in Israel, and swallowing up the inheritance of the Lord, with what vehemency doth he deprecate that challenge; "God forbid, God forbid it me, that I should devour or destroy it!" Although that city, with the rest, had engaged itself in Sheba's sedition, yet how zealously doth Joab remove from himself the suspicion of an intended vastation! How fearful shall their answer be, who, upon the quarrel of their own ambition, have not spared to waste whole tribes of the Israel of God! *Bp. H.*

Like Deborah, this wise woman has bequeathed a fine proverbial expression, now habitually applied to those of her sex who are signalized by their piety and Christian influence—"a mother in Israel," than which we know not a

more venerable designation or more expressive one, when great worth and great wisdom are combined. T. C.

21, 22. Joab requires no other satisfaction than the head of Sheba. This matron had not deserved the name of wise and faithful in Israel if she had not both apprehended the justice of the condition and commended it to her citizens ; whom she easily persuaded to spare their own heads, in not sparing a traitor's. *Bp. H.*—The single condition of peace, is the surrender of the traitor ; it is so in God's dealing with the soul, when it is besieged by conviction and distress ; sin is the traitor ; the beloved lust is the rebel ; part with that, cast away the transgressions, and all shall be well. No peace on any other terms. H.

The royal forces at once returned to the south, and the rebels dispersed to their own homes. A second time, mainly by Joab's skill and rapidity of action, had the storm of civil war been turned aside from the throne of David. There was at last peace in all Israel. *Sime.*—Thus ended this dangerous commotion, and although the result was the establishment of David's power

over all Israel, some damage had been sustained by all the parties concerned. Since David became king over all Israel we have had only one instance of his asking counsel of the Lord, and that was at the beginning of his reign. We shall not be far wrong in ascribing to this neglect the serious mistakes into which he seems to have fallen. *Kit.*

The Officers of David's Court.

Verses 23-26.

A similar list has already been given in ch. 8 : 16-18. There the account of the general administration of the kingdom appropriately follows the summary record of the wars by which that kingdom was established ; and the repetition of it here, after David's restoration to the throne, is equally appropriate. A. F. K.—In the formation of a new cabinet, David, like other limited monarchs after him, was constrained to acquiesce in appointments not altogether to his mind—and more especially in that of Joab, who, as master over all the host, would in those days have all the power of the prime minister. T. C.

Section 276.

A THREE YEARS' FAMINE FOR SAUL'S MASSACRE OF THE GIBEONITES. THE EXECUTION OF SAUL'S SONS. RIZPAH'S MONTHS OF WATCHING BESIDE THE DEAD.

2 SAMUEL 21 : 1-14.

21 1 AND there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year ; and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites ; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them : and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah) : and David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you ? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD ? And the Gibeonites said unto him, It is no matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house ; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they said unto the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the borders of Israel. let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD. And the king said, I will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth ; and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she bare to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite : and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, and they fell all seven together : and they were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the

daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured upon them from heaven ; and she suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, in the day that the Philistines slew Saul in Gilboa : and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son ; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. And they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the sepulchre of Kish his father : and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

With the suppression of the federal revolution under Sheba, the political history of David, as related in the Second Book of Samuel, closes. What follows in this book (ch. 21-24) must be regarded as an Appendix, giving, first, an account of the famine which desolated the land (21 : 1-14), probably in the *earlier* part, and of the pestilence which laid it waste, probably toward the *close* of David's reign (ch. 24) ; secondly, some brief notices of the Philistine wars, and a detailed register of David's heroes ; and, lastly, David's Psalm of thanksgiving (ch. 22), and his last prophetic utterances (23 : 1-7). All these are grouped together at the end of the Second Book of Samuel, probably because it was difficult to insert them in any other place consistently with the plan of the work, which was not intended to be a biography or a history of David, chronologically arranged. Perhaps we should add, that the account of the pestilence was placed last in the book, because it forms an introduction to the preparations made for the building of the Temple by Solomon. A. E.

21 : 1-14. The land was visited with a famine for three years ; the cause of which was declared by the oracle of Jehovah to be " for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." This massacre, in shameful violation of the oath of Joshua and the elders of Israel, was one of those acts of passionate zeal in which Saul tried to drown the remorse of his later years. In reply to David's offer of satisfaction, the Gibeonites demanded the lives of seven of Saul's sons ; and the king gave up to them the two sons of Saul by his concubine Rizpah, and the five sons that Merab had borne to Adriel. These seven were hanged by the Gibeonites on the hill of Gibeah, Saul's own city. They hung there from the beginning of barley harvest till the rains set in, though the law provided that, in such cases, the bodies should be buried by sunset. But Rizpah took her station upon the rock, with only a covering of sackcloth, to keep the bodies from the birds of prey by day and from the wild beasts by night, till the rain

began to fall. Touched with her devotion, David caused their remains to be taken down and interred in the sepulchre of Kish at Zelah, together with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, which he transported from Jabesh-gilead. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, whom David had refused to give up to the Gibeonites, was now the sole survivor of the house of Saul, with his infant son Micah, through whom the family was continued to the latest period of the nation's history. We hear of him again before the end of David's reign. P. S.

1. And there was a famine. There is no adverb of time marking chronological connection with the foregoing narrative. In Palestine a famine was the almost certain consequence of a failure of the winter rains, on which both cornfields and pasturage depend. See 1 K. 18 : 2 ; Joel 1 : 8-20 ; for famine as the result of drought. This famine must have occurred after David became acquainted with Mephibosheth (ch. 9 : 1 ff.), for it is expressly stated that he spared Mephibosheth (verse 7) ; and in all probability before Absalom's rebellion, in the account of which we may trace one, if not two allusions to the execution of Saul's sons (ch. 16 : 7, 8 ; 19 : 28) ; but its date cannot be fixed more exactly, and the phrase *in the days of David* seems designedly indefinite. A. F. K.

When a third year brought matters to a famine point, David began to see something extraordinary in this succession of bad seasons, and, as became him, consulted the Lord. He was answered, that it was because of the wrongs done by Saul to the Gibeonites. *Kit.*—It was an ancient oath, wherein the princes of the congregation had bound themselves, upon Joshua's league, to the Gibeonites, that they would suffer them to live ; an oath, extorted by fraud, but solemn by no less name than the Lord God of Israel. Saul, who spared Agag whom he should have smitten, smites the Gibeonites whom he should have spared. God holds it a high indignity, that his name should be sworn by and violated. Length of time cannot dispense with

our oaths, with our vows ; the vows and oaths of others may bind us, how much more our own ! *Bp. H.*

Saul slew large numbers of the Gibeonites, and doubtless seized their possessions. It is said that he did this "in his zeal for Israel and Judah," and this cannot be explained but on the supposition that the deed was done in order to give the tribes possession of the reserved territories of the Gibeonites. And there is no doubt this would be, and was designed to be, a popular and acceptable act. From the first, the people murmured greatly at the covenant that had been entered into, mainly, it would seem, because they were thus deprived of the spoil of the Gibeonites. Thus, Saul's zeal for Israel and for Judah appears ; and thus also, by their complicity in this gross breach of ancient covenants with a now harmless and faithful people, who for many ages had been Israelites in faith and practice, they laid themselves open to punishment from Him who abhors iniquity and broken faith, and to whom the innocent blood cries not in vain. It would seem that Saul's own family must have been active in this cruel wrong, and had a good share of the spoil, for we find them all, when reduced to a private station, much better off in their worldly circumstances than can else be accounted for, especially as Saul's own estate had gone with the crown, until assigned by David to Mephibosheth. But the punishments of a just God for wrong-doing, whether in nations or individuals, though often delayed, come at last. *Kil.*

The Gibeonites were neither rebels nor heathen. They had submitted at the beginning of the conquest, their very artifice having been but a dexterous acknowledgment of Jehovah's power and of the Hebrew triumph. This was a bold stroke for them, and it brought on them the kings of Jebus, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon in that famous battle when Joshua said, "Sun, stand thou still on *Gibeon*." They obtained a solemn league with the nation, confirmed by an oath taken by the princes of the congregation. The agreement was that the Gibeonites would be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the nation, and that the nation would preserve and protect *them*. And so thoroughly had they incorporated themselves with the Israelites that the historian of the Second Book of Samuel stops to explain that they were "not of the children of Israel, but a remnant of the Amorites." This solemn league and formal oath, the conditions of which had been observed by the Gibeonites for long years, Saul ruthlessly broke. *Knox*.—Whatever may have been

Saul's motive, it is certain that by his massacre of the Gibeonites a great national sin was committed, and that for this sin the nation had never humbled itself, and never made reparation. *W. G. B.*

4-6. The answer of the Gibeonites to David implies their feeling that the Hebrew nation, as such, by its sympathy and concurrence with Saul, had sinned against them, and they seem to regard it as an act of moderation on their part, that they waived their claim as against the nation, and restricted it to Saul in the persons of a few of his representatives. "We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house ; *neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel*. The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered up to us, that we may hang them up before the Lord at Gibeah." The Gibeah which they proposed to make the scene of this tragedy, was the very town in which Saul had held his residence ; and which was no doubt chosen by them to make this act the more monumental. David could not refuse their demand. He gave them seven of Saul's descendants. They were two sons of Saul by Rizpah the same concubine respecting whom Abner had offended Ishbosheth, and five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul. David was determined to save Mephibosheth and his sons for Jonathan's sake, and it was probably out of respect to this feeling, that the Gibeonites did not insist upon the inclusion of these, the rightful heirs and representatives of Saul. One would think this fact a sufficient answer to those who venture to suspect that the whole matter was a contrivance between David and the priest to get rid of the remnant of the house of Saul, of whose remaining influence in the land, the late commotion had made him apprehensive. If this were the case, how came he to cut off only collateral branches, and spare all those in the direct line of succession to the throne ? In this point of view, Mephibosheth and his son Micah, and his four sons (perhaps already born) were those from whom there was most danger to apprehend. Yet these were spared by preference. If the reader turn to 1 Chron. 8 : 33, 34, he will find an enumeration of the descendants of Meribaal or Mephibosheth, heirs of the house of Saul, exhibiting, perhaps, the most numerous descent from any one person of the age in which David lived. *Kil.*

The Gibeonites did not require this out of malice against Saul or his family (had they been revengeful they would have moved it themselves

long before), but for the people of Israel whom they saw plagued for the injury done to them. “*We will hang them up unto the Lord* (verse 6), to satisfy his justice, not to gratify any revenge of our own ; for the good of the public, not for our own reputation.” H.—The holiness of the land in which Jehovah dwelt among His people must be guarded. But one of the worst defilements of a land was that by innocent blood shed in it. According to the majestic view of the Old Testament, blood shed by a murderer’s hand could not be covered up ; it was, so to speak, a living thing which cried for vengeance, until the blood of him that had shed it silenced its voice, or, in other words, till the moral equipoise had been restored. While the same section of the law provided safety in case of unintentional homicide, and regulated the old practice of “*avenging blood*,” it also protected the land against crime, which it would not allow to be compensated for by money. Hence the Gibeonites were strictly within the letter of the law in demanding retaliation on the house of Saul, in accordance with the universally acknowledged Old Testament principle of the solidarity of a family ; and David had no alternative but to concede their claim. This is one aspect of the question. The other must be even more reverently approached. We can only point out how they who lived in those times (especially such as the Gibeonites) would feel that they might cry to God for vengeance, and expect it from the Just and True One ; and how the sternest lessons concerning public breach of faith and public crimes would be of the deepest national importance after such a reign as that of Saul. A. E.

7, 8. No choice remained to David but to yield to this legal requisition. God had taken the wrong into His own hands, to avenge by His own power, and famine was perhaps destroying far more than blood-revenge required. He therefore did not simply consent, but approved this fulfilment of the law, and at once proceeded to meet the demand. Knox.

9. And they fell all seven together. The evident intention of God in ordering the death of this part of Saul’s family, was to give a public attestation of his abhorrence of Saul’s perfidy and cruelty, to strike a terror into the princes his successors and caution them against committing the like offences. The death of these seven persons, therefore, supposing them all innocent, was in this view no punishment inflicted personally on them by God, but an appointment of God in virtue of his sovereign right over the lives of all men ; to teach princes mod-

eration and equity, and to prevent the commission of those enormous crimes which are inconsistent with the welfare of all civil government. Accordingly, God dealt with these persons exactly as if in the course of his providential dispensations he had cut them off by a natural death. That children do very frequently suffer and die for the sins of their parents in which they have had no share, is evident from history and the constant experience of all ages and nations. Chandler.

The place, time, and manner of their execution, all added to the solemnity of their being sacrificed to Divine justice. They were hanged up as anathemas, under a peculiar mark of God’s displeasure ; for the law had said, *He that is hanged, is accursed of God* (De. 21 : 23). Christ, being made a curse for us, and dying to satisfy for our sins, and to turn away the wrath of God, became obedient to this ignominious death. They were hanged up in Gibeah of Saul, to show that it was for his sin that they died. They were hanged to expiate the guilt of the house of Saul ; and thus God accomplished the ruin of that family, for the blood of the priests and their families also, which, doubtless, now came in remembrance before God, and inquisition was made for it. Yet the blood of the *Gibeonites* only is mentioned ; because that was shed in violation of a sacred oath, which, though sworn long before, though obtained by a wile, and the promise made to Canaanites, yet is thus severely reckoned for. The despising of the oath and breaking of the covenant will be recompensed on the head of those who thus profane God’s sacred name (Ez. 17 : 18, 19). They were put to death *in the days of harvest, at the beginning of harvest* (verse 10), to show that they were thus sacrificed for the turning away of that wrath of God, which had withheld from them their harvest mercies for some years past, and to obtain his favor in the present harvest. Those executions must not be complained of as cruel, which are become necessary to the public welfare. Better that seven of Saul’s bloody house be hanged, than that all Israel be famished. H.

Under the Old Testament the rights of the individual were not so clearly acknowledged as they are under the New ; the family was a moral unit, and the father was the responsible agent for the whole. When Achan sinned, his whole household shared his punishment ; all were involved in the sin of the father. However strange it may seem to us, it did not appear at all strange in David’s time that this rule should be applied in the case of Saul. On the contrary, it would probably be thought that it showed con-

siderable moderation of feeling not to demand the death of the whole living posterity of Saul, but to limit the demand to the number of seven. Doubtless the Gibeonites had suffered to an enormous extent. Thousands of them had probably been slain. People might be sorry for the seven young men that had to die, but that there was anything essentially unjust or even harsh in the transaction is a view of the case that would occur to no one. Justice is often hard ; executions are always grim ; but here was a nation that had already experienced three years of famine for the sin of Saul, and that would experience yet far more if no public expiation should take place ; and seven men were not very many to die for a nation. W. G. B.

Saul's sons, who were not charged with being in any way personally accessory to their father's crime, were put to death to expiate it. The sins of the father were visited upon the children. Now, as Ezekiel clearly teaches, no innocent man can be regarded as justly punishable for another's sin : but in those early ages the family was regarded as an unit, and the sins of the head of the family were regarded as involving all its members in their consequences. The sense of the rights and the responsibilities of each individual was as yet undeveloped. Consequently, as seen by the people, the execution of Saul's sons was a *judicial* act of retribution ; but this aspect of the transaction was only an "accommodation" to the current ideas of the age. Viewed in its essential character as sanctioned by God, it was a *didactic* act, designed to teach the guilt of sin. God has an absolute power of life and death over His creatures, and may at any time take away the life which He has given. "The extermination of the Canaanites, and the destruction of the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of Achan, and of Saul, were great lessons, and lessons which the great Master could give by the simple exercise of His right as the Lord of human life. They were *real* acts, and expressed the real mind of the Deity, only as acts of instruction. God cannot punish a man for the reason of another's sin ; but it is open to God to inflict death upon His creatures, *without* a reason, if it so pleases Him ; and of course for a reason if it be a good one—in order to strike wholesome terror, in order to keep a standing memento, in order to associate sin with a spectacle of horror and destruction." (Mozley.) The act was no doubt one which would not have been sanctioned in a more enlightened age ; but the supposition that "David seized this opportunity to rid himself of seven possible claimants to the throne"

(Smith's "Dict. of the Bible") is a baseless calumny, sufficiently refuted by his care for Mephibosheth, and by the obscurity of the victims ; and the idea that he may have been, for a while at least, "infected by the baneful example of the Phœnicians" in offering human sacrifices, is contradicted by all that we know of his character. A. F. K.

Well near forty years are past betwixt the commission of the sin and the reckoning for it. It is a vain hope that is raised from the delay of judgment. No time can be any prejudice to the Ancient of Days : when we have forgotten our sins, when the world hath forgotten us, he sues us afresh for our arrearages. *Bp. H.*—Particular events may for a long while be delayed, and the very delay of them may, in concurrence with the operations of Providence, be one means at last of bringing them to pass with greater observation and more convincing evidence of the interposition of God in bringing them about, as is frequently the case in long-concealed murders. God, therefore, in a time of profound peace, when David's government was settled and there was nothing to interrupt the course of justice, punishes the people with a three years' famine, to let them feel his displeasure, to render them solicitous to know the cause of it and take the proper methods to appease it. So that though no train of intervening and unavoidable circumstances can impede the operations of Providence, or prevent what God is determined to bring to pass ; yet such circumstances may, for a very considerable while, impede the operations of human justice ; nevertheless, how long soever that justice may be delayed, it will certainly at last take place, when God judges it the proper season to execute it, and when such execution shall most effectually demonstrate his inspection and tend to secure the purposes of his moral providence and government over mankind. *Chandler.*

10. The grimness of the mode of punishment was softened by an incident of great moral beauty, which cannot but touch the heart of every man of sensibility. Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, and mother of two of the victims, combining the tenderness of a mother and the courage of a hero, took her position beside the gibbet ; and, undeterred by the sight of the decaying bodies, she suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. W. G. B.—She spread on the rocky floor the thick mourning cloth of black sackcloth, which as a widow she wore, and crouching there she watched that neither vulture nor jackal should molest the bodies. That

she did not seek to take them down, that no one, moved by her devotion, offered to help her, seems to show that all acquiesced in the execution of the approved law. That she waited for water to drop out of heaven, signifies that she waited for the token of the cessation of the wrath of heaven in the falling rain in October. *Grove.*—The courage and self-denial needed for this work were great, for the risk of violence from wild beasts was very serious. All honor to this woman and her noble heart! David appears to have been deeply impressed by her heroism. W. G. B.

11-14. When David heard of it, he felt himself bound to interfere to prevent the continuance of a scene so distressful, and so revolting to the feelings of the Israelites. He caused the remains to be removed; and, obtaining the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh-gilead, had the whole deposited, with becoming respect and honor, in the sepulchre of the family at Zelzah. The reader who recollects the strong desire of the Israelites, that their bones should rest with those of their kindred—as lately instanced in the case of Barzillai—will appreciate this mark of attention on the part of David,

which must have been most gratifying to all Israel, and especially to the friends and connections of the house of Saul. *Kit.*—David knew how to sympathize with the childless Rizpah, and Rizpah was doubtless consoled when, in a princely burial, she saw honor done to her husband's house. Justice first, and then mercy. This is the way of the Lord, and David, as the Lord's vicegerent, walked in it. *F. W. Hook.*

We offer a concluding remark, founded on the tone of this narrative. It is marked, as every one must perceive, by a subdued, solemn tone. Whatever may be the opinion of our time as to the need of apologizing for it, it is evident that no apology was deemed necessary for the transaction at the time this record was written. The feeling of all parties evidently was, that it was indispensable that things should take the course they did. No one expressed wonder when the famine was accounted for by the crime of Saul. No one objected when the question of expiation was referred to the Gibeonites. The house of Saul made no protest when seven of his sons were demanded for death. It seemed as if God were speaking, and the part of man was simply to obey. W. G. B.

Section 277.

SINFUL NUMBERING OF ISRAEL. ITS PUNISHMENT BY PESTILENCE STAYED AT DAVID'S REPENTANCE. MORIAH, THE PLACE OF HIS ACCEPTED SACRIFICE, APPOINTED AS THE SITE OF THE FUTURE TEMPLE.

2 SAMUEL 24 : 1-25. 1 CHRONICLES 21 : 1-30 ; 22 : 1.

2 S. 24 : 1 AND again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah. And the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now to and fro through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the sum of the people. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it : but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the peo-

1 Chron. 21 : 1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan ; and bring me word, that I may know the sum of them. And Joab said, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be : but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of guilt unto Israel? Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. And Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand

5 ple of Israel. And they passed over Jordan,
and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the
city that is in the middle of the valley of
6 Gad, and unto Jazer : then they came to
Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi ;
and they came to Dan-jaan, and round about
7 to Zidon, and came to the stronghold of
Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and
of the Canaanites : and they went out to the
8 south of Judah, at Beer-sheba. So when
they had gone to and fro through all the
land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of
9 nine months and twenty days. And Joab
gave up the sum of the numbering of the
people unto the king : and there were in Is-
rael eight hundred thousand valiant men that
drew the sword ; and the men of Judah were
five hundred thousand men.

10 And David's heart smote him after that he
had numbered the people. And David said
unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that
I have done : but now, O LORD, put away, I
beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant ;
11 for I have done very foolishly. And when
David rose up in the morning, the word of
the LORD came unto the prophet Gad,
12 David's seer, saying, Go and speak unto
David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three
things ; choose thee one of them, that I may
13 do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and
told him, and said unto him, Shall seven
years of famine come unto thee in thy land ?
or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes
while they pursue thee ? or shall there be
three days' pestilence in thy land ? now ad-
vise thee, and consider what answer I shall
14 return to him that sent me. And David said
unto Gad, I am in a great strait : let us fall
now into the hand of the LORD ; for his mer-
cies are great : and let me not fall into the
15 hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence
upon Israel from the morning even to the
time appointed : and there died of the peo-
ple from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy
16 thousand men. And when the angel
stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to
destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil,
and said to the angel that destroyed the peo-
ple, It is enough ; now stay thine hand. And
the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-
17 floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David
spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel
that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have
sinned, and I have done perversely : but
these sheep, what have they done ? let thine
hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against
my father's house.

men that drew sword : and Judah was four
hundred threescore and ten thousand men
6 that drew sword. But Levi and Benjamin
counted he not among them : for the king's
7 word was abominable to Joab. And God
was displeased with this thing ; therefore he
8 smote Israel. And David said unto God, I
have sinned greatly, in that I have done this
thing : but now, put away, I beseech thee,
the iniquity of thy servant ; for I have done
9 very foolishly. And the LORD spake unto
10 Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and speak
unto David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I
offer thee three things ; choose thee one of
11 them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad
came to David, and said unto him, Thus
12 saith the LORD, Take which thou wilt ; either
three years of famine ; or three months to be
consumed before thy foes, while that the
sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee ; or
else three days the sword of the LORD, even
pestilence in the land, and the angel of the
LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of
Israel. Now therefore consider what answer
13 I shall return to him that sent me. And
David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait :
let me fall now into the hand of the LORD ;
for very great are his mercies : and let me not
14 fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent
a pestilence upon Israel : and there fell of
15 Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent
an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it : and
as he was about to destroy, the LORD beheld,
and he repented him of the evil, and said to
the destroying angel, It is enough ; now stay
thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood
by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the
angel of the LORD stand between the earth
and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his
hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then
David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth,
17 fell upon their faces. And David said unto
God, Is it not I that commanded the people
to be numbered ? even I it is that have sinned
and done very wickedly ; but these sheep,
what have they done ? let thine hand, I pray
thee, O LORD my God, be against me, and
against my father's house ; but not against
thy people, that they should be plagued.
18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad
to say to David, that David should go up,
and rear an altar unto the LORD in the thresh-
19 ing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David
went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake
20 in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned
back, and saw the angel ; and his four sons

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David went up according to the saying of Gad, as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked forth, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him : and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him : behold, the oxen for the burnt-offering, and the threshing instruments and the furniture of the oxen for the wood : all this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay ; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price : neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

that were with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. Then David said to Ornan, Give me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build thereon an altar unto the LORD : for the full price shalt thou give it me : that the plague may be stayed from the people.

23 And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes : lo, I give thee the oxen for burnt-offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meal-offering ; I give it all. And king David said to Ornan, Nay ; but I will verily buy it for the full price : for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer a burnt-offering without cost. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the LORD ; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the LORD commanded the angel ; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God : for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

1 Chron. 22 : 1 Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel.

There is no definite note of time to show when the events here recorded took place, but several indications point to the later years of David's reign. The language of verse 1, "*again* the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel," evidently refers to the famine recorded in ch. 21 and points to a date after that occurrence. It would have been impossible for the commander-in-chief to spend nearly ten months in taking the census, except at a time of permanent peace. David's preparations for building the Temple, which occupied the last years of his reign, are narrated in Chronicles as the immediate sequel of his purchase of Araunah's threshing-floor. The narrative in Chronicles agrees much less closely than usual with Samuel. A. F. K.

Comparing the two accounts of this sin and of the judgment sent because of it, we find the diversities somewhat numerous ; the real discrepancies few ; from which the inference seems warranted that these authors drew from different original sources and not from one and the same. There is not the least difficulty in assuming that the contemporary annals of Israel were written by more hands than one ; e.g., "the acts of David the king, first and last, in the Book of Samuel the seer, and in the Book of Nathan the prophet, and in the Book of Gad the seer," as we read 1 Chron. 29 : 29. In the ultimate compilation of the books we have (e.g., 2 S. and 1 Chron.), the compiler of the former may have

had one or two of these original documents ; the compiler of the latter, the remaining one ; or, if each had them all, he may have found slight differences ; possibly some discrepancies—and would dispose of these according to his own judgment or upon traditionary data.

The sin of David in numbering the people in its result fixed the site of Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 3 : 1). A narrative of these scenes appears in both 2 S. 24 and 1 Chron. 21. The same Hebrew word rendered "moved" in Samuel is rendered "provoked" in Chronicles. The agent is said in Samuel to be the Lord, but in Chronicles, Satan, the prince of evil spirits. As to the agent in this temptation, it was God only in the permissive sense ; Satan in the personal and positive sense, permitted of God, and by his very nature, wanting nothing more than the barest permission to give scope to the Satanic malice of his heart, and involve both David and the Lord's people in terrible calamities. It may, perhaps, be put to the account of "progress of doctrine" that in the later book (Chronicles) this agency is ascribed to Satan, while in the Book of Samuel, neither his name nor his agency appears. H. C.—The nation had sinned and incurred His anger, and God instigated David to an act which brought down a sharp punishment on the nation. The statement that God incited David to do what was afterward condemned and punished as a heinous sin cannot of course mean that He *compelled* David to sin, but that in order to test and prove his character He allowed the temptation to assault him. Thus, while we read that "God himself tempteth no man," we are taught to pray "Bring us not into temptation." The older record (Samuel) speaks only of God's permissive action : the latter (Chronicles) tells us of the malicious instrumentality of Satan. The case is like that of Job. A. F. K.

The numbering of the people was one of the last and most reprehensible acts of David. From the expressions here used, we learn that God permitted Satan to tempt David to the commission of a crime, which would draw down punishment on himself and his people, as he afterward permitted the same evil and lying spirit to seduce the prophets of Ahab (1 K. 22 : 22), and the disciple of Christ (Luke 22 : 3). The ruling passion by which the tempter assailed David was *the pride of life*, which, though checked and mortified by the wholesome restraints of adversity, broke out again in the sunshine of prosperity. David's offence seems chiefly to have consisted in his persisting to require a muster of all his subjects able to bear arms with-

out the Divine command, without necessity, in a time of profound peace, to indulge an idle vanity and presumption, as if he put his trust more in the number of his subjects than in the Divine protection ; and the offence of his people may have been similar, always elated as they were in prosperity, and provoking the anger of the Lord by their forgetfulness of him.

Hales.—Moses numbered the people by God's authority, to show that they were all his subjects : David seems to have numbered them to show that they were his own people, and to display his own sovereignty, which provoked God. *Bp. Wilson.*

Yet another and *real* cause is to be found in the verse which introduces the narrative, and which is almost invariably lost sight of in the common accounts of this transaction. It is that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." Now the anger of the Lord could only be awakened by unfaithfulness and evil-doing ; and that, whatever its precise nature, was the real cause of the calamity that followed, and relieves the case of the apparent harshness, of which so much has been said, of making the people suffer for the offence of their king. On this account "the Lord moved David to number Israel." *Kit.*

It was not the census itself which was displeasing to God, but the motive which inspired David to take it. Various conjectures have been suggested to account for David's wish to number the people. Some suppose that he intended to develop the military power of the nation, with a view to foreign conquest ; others that he meditated the organization of an imperial despotism and the imposition of fresh taxes. But whether any definite design of increased armaments or heavier taxation lay behind it or not, it seems clear that what constituted the sin of the act was the vainglorious spirit which prompted it. In a moment of pride and ambition—pride at the prosperity of the kingdom, ambition to be like the kings of the nations round about—he desired to know to the full over how vast and populous a kingdom he ruled, forgetting that the strength of Israel consisted not in the number of its people, but in the protecting care of God. This view is strongly corroborated by Joab's expostulation, "The Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it : but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing ?" It was a momentary apostasy from Jehovah ; an oblivion of that spirit of dependence which was the duty and the glory of the kings of Israel. The sin

was not confined to David ; it had infected the nation. It is expressly said that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled *against Israel*." It may be that now, on the very threshold of their national existence, they were tempted by visions of worldly glory to forget that Israel was not to realize its vocation to the world in the guise of a conquering secular state, but as Jehovah's witness among the nations. If so, if pride was alienating the heart of king and people from their allegiance to Jehovah, a prompt chastisement was the truest mercy. A. F. K.

3. Who can but wonder to see Joab the saint, and David the trespasser? No prophet could speak better than that man of blood ; "The Lord thy God increase the people a hundredfold more than they be, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it : but why doth my lord the king desire this thing? why will he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" *Bp. H.*—Joab seems to have had a certain amount of regard to the will of God and the theocratic constitution of the kingdom, for he was loyal to David from the very beginning, up to the contest between Solomon and Adonijah. It is evident that Joab felt strongly that in the step which he proposed to take David would be acting a part unworthy of himself and of the constitution of the kingdom, and by displeasing God would expose himself to evils far beyond any advantage he might hope to gain by ascertaining the number of the people. **4.** For once—and this time, unhappily—David was too strong for the son of Zeruiah. The enumerators of the people were despatched to take the census. W. G. B.

The sums-total were probably never made up for preservation, except in a rough way ; they were never put into the official chronicles. In the rough, round numbers of the two Books of Samuel and of Chronicles, there is a difference of many thousands in the enumeration. A rough enumeration—not counting Benjamin—made the warriors of Israel eight hundred thousand, and of Judah five hundred thousand, or one million three hundred thousand in all. Or, taking the other estimate, there were one million one hundred thousand warriors of Israel, and four hundred and seventy thousand warriors of Judah, or one million five hundred and seventy thousand in all. *Knox.*—This discrepancy may be due to textual corruption, but more probably arises from a difference in the original estimates, or in the oral tradition with respect to them. A. F. K.—This showed a population of from five to seven millions for the whole land. Considering all the wars, servitudes, and internal conflicts during the genera-

tions, this was a great increase from the six hundred and one thousand warriors and three millions of people under Moses on the plains of Moab. *Knox.*

The numbers have been attacked as exaggerated, and far exceeding the possible capacity of the country. The numbers given imply a total population of five or six millions at least, and the area of the country is estimated at about eleven thousand square miles. This gives (making allowance for the excepted tribes) between five and six hundred to the square mile, a high but not impossible rate of population when the extreme fertility of the country in ancient times is taken into consideration. The ruins with which Palestine is covered in every direction prove that the population was exceptionally dense.

The Choice of Punishments.

2 S. 24 : 10-14.

10. David's heart smote him. Conscience accused him, and he became aware of his guilt. He recognized the sinfulness of the proud and vainglorious spirit of self-confidence and desire for worldly aggrandizement which had induced him to take the census. A. F. K. —"David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that which I have done ; and now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly." Once alive to his sin, his humiliation is very profound. His confession is frank, hearty, complete. He shows no proud desire to remain on good terms with himself, seeks nothing to break his fall or to make his humiliation less before Joab and before the people. He is never greater than when acknowledging his sin. W. G. B.

11. And David arose in the morning, and, etc., after the recognition and confession of his sin. The E. V. gives the impression that the conviction of his sin was the result of Gad's visit, which is not the meaning of the passage. Gad was not sent until after his confession and prayer for pardon. A. F. K.

Chron., verse 12. It was a hard and woful choice of three years' famine added to three forepast ; or of three months' flight from the sword of an enemy ; or three days' pestilence. The Almighty that hath fore-determined his judgment, refers it to David's will as if it were utterly undetermined. God had resolved ; yet David may choose. That infinite wisdom hath foreseen the very will of his creature, which, while it freely inclines itself to what it

would rather, unwittingly wills that which was fore-appointed in heaven.

2 S., verse 14. Yet, behold, neither sins, nor threats, nor fears can bereave a true penitent of his faith; "Let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." There can be no evil of punishment wherein God hath not a hand; there could be no famine, no sword, without him; but some evils are more immediate from a Divine stroke; such was that plague into which David is unwillingly willing to fall. *Bp. H.*—There are some judgments which come more immediately from his hand than others, as famine and pestilence; and which of these shall be the scourge, he refers it to God, who chooses the shortest, that he might the sooner testify his being reconciled. *H.*

15. Left to choose between famine, defeat, and pestilence, David wisely and well cast himself upon the Lord, finding comfort only in the thought, which has so often brought relief to those who realize it, that, even when suffering for sin, it is well to fall into the hands of Jehovah. Nor was his unuttered hope disappointed. The pestilence, terrible as it was in its desolations, was shortened from three days to less than one day: "from the morning to the time of the assembly"—viz., for the evening sacrifice. *A. E.*—**To the time appointed.** Not to the end of the three days; for (verse 16) "the Lord repented him of the evil;" it means, probably, the appointed time of evening prayer—that is, about the ninth hour of the day; according to which sense the plague lasted nine hours. *Bp. Patrick.*—Joab is nine months in passing with his pen, the angel but nine hours in passing with his sword, through all the coasts and corners of the land of Israel. See how easily God can bring down the proudest sinners, and how much we owe daily to the Divine patience. *H.*

Humble confessions and devout penance cannot always avert temporal judgments. God's angel is abroad; and within that short compass of time sweeps away seventy thousand Israelites. David was proud of the number of his subjects; now they are abated that he may see cause of humiliation in the matter of his glory; in what we have offended, we commonly smart. These thousands of Israel were not so innocent, that they should only perish for David's sin; their sins were the motives, both of this sin and punishment; besides the respect of David's offence, they die for themselves. *Bp. H.*

16. The Lord repented him of the evil. On the one hand Scripture teaches us that, "God is not a man that he should repent" (*Nu. 23 : 19 ; 1 S. 15 : 29*); on the other hand

it does not shrink from saying that God repents when, as here, upon man's penitence He withdraws or mitigates a punishment; when, upon man's faithlessness or disobedience, He cancels a promise or revokes a blessing which He had given. God's repentance does not mean that He who foreknows all things *regrets* His action, nor is it a sign of mutability. Scripture boldly states the two apparently contradictory truths and leaves conscience to harmonize them. *A. F. K.*

God reveals himself as repenting. He speaks as if in sore disappointment at the evil course of men: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." It was the grief of a loving father over the evil ways of his children, a pain that is sharp and a heart that is sore. Moses recognized this trait of the Divine character, and earnestly prayed that he would "repent of this evil against thy people." "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (*Ex. 32 : 14*). "It repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them" (*Ju. 2 : 18*). "And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil" (*2 S. 24 : 16*). In the book of the prophet Jonah this trait is brought out very strongly. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them" (*3 : 10*). The prophet explained the reason for this revocation of a positive and unqualified decree. "I know that thou art a gracious God, and full of compassion and slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repentest thee of the evil" (*4 : 2*). The Divine repentance is a constant leaning to the side of mercy. He is intent upon setting aside the penalty of sin. He listens for the first sigh of penitence. While he is grieved and disappointed and sad at the waywardness and rebellion of his creatures, he rejoices at their return. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but implores them to return and live. He reasons with them, and shows them the madness and folly of their course. He makes it plain that if any one persists in wickedness it is not God's fault that he does so, nor is the punishment which the sinner brings upon himself of God's willing infliction. All this is intensely human—so much so that we cannot distinguish it from the character of a very tender-hearted and benevolent father. Any one who desires the Divine companionship and protection and help can have it with the amplest and most cordial welcome, simply for the ask-

ing. God is swift in mercy and love, and very patient in long-suffering. This is God's merciful attitude to us, and we can verify it in our experience by accepting it and going to him. We shall find him just what he thus reveals himself to be. God is the most tender, loving, and lovely Being in the universe. He is the best friend. He is all that the longing heart can desire. We must not abuse and pervert this tender and forbearing attribute of the Divine character by making it a basis for hope that he will not thoroughly vindicate his law. On the contrary, we must remember that in doing despite to this spirit of grace, we are treasuring up against ourselves a retribution all the more terrible because we have insulted and trodden under foot the loving sensibilities of God. *Interior.*

Stay thy hand. God only revoked that which he had decreed on a certain condition ; which was, that three days' pestilence should come upon the country, unless David and his people repented. *Bp. Patrick.*—**The angel was by the threshing-floor.** This was on Mount Moriah. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that in the very place where Abraham, by a countermand from heaven, was stayed from slaying his son, this angel, by a like countermand, was stayed from destroying Jerusalem. It is for the sake of the great Sacrifice, that our forfeited lives are preserved from the destroying angel. *H.*—It was a fitting spot for mercy upon Israel, this place where of old faithful Abraham had been ready to offer his only son unto God ; fitting also as still outside the city ; but chiefly in order that the pardoning and sparing mercy now shown might indicate the site where, on the great altar of burnt-offering, abundant mercy in pardon and acceptance would in the future be dispensed to Israel. *A. E.*

17. These sheep, what have they done? David takes all the blame upon himself, for his offence had been the immediate cause of the plague, and it is characteristic of true penitence to dwell exclusively on its own sin, without respect to the complicity of others. But it is clear from verse 1 that the sin was the sin of the people as well as of David. *A. F. K.*—No one but must admire the spirit of David when the angel appeared on Mount Moriah. Owning frankly his own great sin, and especially his sin as a shepherd, he bared his own bosom to the sword, and entreated God to let the punishment fall on him and on his father's house. Why should the sheep suffer for the sin of the shepherd? *W. G. B.*

He intercedes for the people whose bitter lamentations made his heart to ache. *These sheep, what have they done?* Done! Why it was their sin that provoked God to leave David to himself to do as he did ; yet, as became a penitent, he is severe upon his own faults, while he extenuates theirs. Most people, when God's judgments are abroad, charge others with being the cause of them, and care not who falls by them so they can escape ; but David's penitent and public spirit was otherwise affected. Let this remind us of the grace of our Lord Jesus, who gave himself for our sins, and was willing that God's hand should be against him, that we might escape. The shepherd was smitten that the sheep might be spared. *H.*

Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. Oh, the admirable charity of David, that would confine the plague to himself and his house, and sues to interpose himself between his people and the Lord's just vengeance! *Bp. H.*—What a noble and generous concern for the safety of his people does this pathetic expostulation manifest! Here is the real language and spirit of a genuine shepherd of his people, willing to devote himself and his family to God, for the preservation of his subjects. *Chandler.*

David Erects an Altar on Araunah's Threshing-floor, by God's Direction.

Verses 18-25.

18. O Father of all mercies, how little pleasure dost thou take in the death of sinners! It was thine own pity that stayed the destroyer. Ere David could see the angel thou hadst restrained him: "It is enough, now stay thy hand." Now God calls for that sacrifice where-with he will be appeased. An altar must be built in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Lo, in that very hill, where the angel held the sword of Abraham from killing his son, doth God now hold the sword of the angel from killing his people! Upon this very ground shall the temple after stand. Here shall be the holy altar, which shall send up the acceptable oblations of God's people in succeeding generations.

22, 23. Rich and bountiful Araunah is ready to meet David in so holy a motion ; and munificently offers his Sion for the place, his oxen for the sacrifice, his carts and ploughs and other utensils of his husbandry for the wood. *Bp. H.*—When David and his followers came, they were prepared freely to give, not only the threshing-floor, but also all within it, if only Jehovah

were pleased to accept the prayer of the king. Thus most significantly, in its typical aspect, were Jew and Gentile here brought together to co-operate in the dedication of the Temple-site. A. E.

24. Two frank hearts are well met : David would buy ; Araunah would give. The Jebusite would not sell ; David will not take. Since it was for God and to David, Araunah is loath to bargain : since it was for God, David wisheth to pay dear ; " I will not offer burnt-offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." Heroical spirits do well become eminent persons. He that knew it was better to give than to receive, would not receive but give. There can be no devotion in a niggardly heart ; as unto dainty palates so to the godly soul, that tastes sweetest that costs most ; nothing is dear enough for the Creator of all things. It is a heartless piety of those base-minded Christians that care only to serve God good cheap. *Bp. H.*

So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. In Chronicles we read, " David gave for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight." This seeming discrepancy as to the price has been accounted for in different ways. The simplest and most probable explanation is that these two passages refer to different transactions. The statement in Samuel gives the price paid for the threshing-floor and the oxen simply. That in Chronicles is " for the place," not the threshing-floor alone, but the entire surface of the hill, or all the ground owned by Araunah. Samuel is concerned merely with the spot on which the altar stood and sacrifices were offered. The writer of Chronicles is thinking of the entire tract procured for the site of the temple. For this fifty silver shekels would evidently be inadequate. W. H. G.

Chron., verse 26. And as if publicly and from heaven to ratify what had been done, fire unkindled by man fell upon the altar and consumed the sacrifices. But from that moment the destroying sword of the angel was sheathed at the command of God. A. E.—God answered David *from heaven by fire*. To signify that God's anger was turned away from him, the fire that might justly have fastened upon the sinner, fastened upon the sacrifice, and consumed that ; and, upon this, the destroying sword was returned into its sheath. Thus Christ was made sin, and a curse, for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him, that through him God might be to us, not a consuming Fire, but a reconciled Father.

29, 30. He continued to offer his sacrifices upon this altar. The brazen altar which Moses made was at Gibeon, and there all the sacrifices of Israel were offered ; but David was so terrified at the sight of the sword of the angel that he *could not go thither*. The business required haste when the plague was begun. Aaron must go quickly, nay, he must *run*, to make atonement (Nu. 16 : 46, 47). And the case here was no less urgent ; so that David had not time to go to Gibeon ; nor durst he leave the angel with his sword drawn over Jerusalem, lest the fatal stroke should be given before he came back. And therefore God, in tenderness to him, bade him build an altar in that place, dispensing with his own law concerning one altar because of the present distress, and accepting the sacrifices offered on this new altar, which was not set up in opposition to that but in concurrence with it. The symbols of unity were not so much insisted on as unity itself. Nay, when the present distress was over, David as long as he lived sacrificed there, though the altar at Gibeon was still kept up ; for God had owned the sacrifices that were here offered, and had testified his acceptance of them (verse 28). On those administrations in which we have experienced the tokens of God's presence, and have found that he is with us of a truth, it is good to continue our attendance. " Here God has graciously met me, and therefore I will still expect to meet with him."

1 Chron. 22 : 1. The place for the building of the temple, *Then David said*, by inspiration of God, and as a declaration of his mind, *This is the house of the Lord God*. If a temple must be built for God, it is fit that it be left to him to choose the ground, for all the earth is his ; and this is the ground he makes choice of : it had pertained to a Jebusite, and perhaps there was not a spot of ground besides, in or about Jerusalem, that did so ; a happy presage of the setting up of the Gospel temple among the Gentiles. The ground was a threshing-floor ; for the Church of the living God is his floor, his threshing, and *the corn of his floor* (Is. 21 : 10). Christ's fan is in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor. This is to be the house, because this is the altar ; the temple was built for the sake of the altar ; there were altars long before there were temples. H.

This altar first distinctly marked the hill as the sacred spot which Jehovah had long promised to choose for his abode. The ark had indeed been placed for some time in the city of David, but the stated sacrifices had still been offered on the original brazen altar before the

tabernacle of Gibeon ; and even after the removal of the ark, God had spoken to David of His choice of a place to build His house as yet to be made. That choice was now revealed by the descent of fire from heaven on David's sacrifice, as upon the altar of burnt-offering in the wilderness ; and David recognized the sign, and said, " This is the house of Jehovah God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel." The place received the name of Moriah (*vision*) from the appearance of God to David, as the destroying angel, and then by the sign of fire. P. S.—Thus the threshing-floor was appointed to be the site of the temple which Solomon was to build ; and the spot where David had hastily reared his altar was to be the place where, for hundreds of years, day after day, morning and evening, the blood of the burnt-offering was to flow, and the fumes of incense to ascend before God. W. G. B.

Instructive and Helpful Suggestions.

As long as the devil is alive there is danger ; and though a strong Christian may be too hard for, and may overcome him in one thing, he may be too hard for, yea, and may overcome the Christian two for one afterward. Thus he served David, and thus he served Peter, and thus he in our day has served many more. The strongest are weak, the wisest are fools, when suffered to be sifted as wheat in Satan's sieve ; yea, and have often been so proved, to the wounding of their great hearts and the dishonor of religion. Bunyan.

There is a sense, and a very true sense, in which David's sin applies to us. People are very fond of numbering the good things they have or suppose themselves to have. This is the peril to which our Lord refers when He says, " Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also ;" that is, you will be always brooding in your heart upon them, and they will fill your mind to the exclusion of all spiritual thoughts. The Bible takes us out of ourselves, and directs us to God as the great object of our love, and in Him to our neighbor. " Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Mozley.

What a wonderful thing is sanctified affliction ! While its root lies in the very corruption of our nature, its fruit consists of the best blessings of Heaven. The root of David's affliction was

carnal pride ; but under God's sanctifying grace, it was followed by the erection of a temple associated with heavenly blessing, not to one nation only, but to all. When affliction, duly sanctified, is thus capable of bringing such blessings, it makes the fact all the more lamentable that affliction is so often unsanctified. It is vain to imagine that everything of the nature of affliction is sure to turn to good. It can turn to good on one condition only—when your heart is humbled under the rod, and in the same humble, chastened spirit as David you say, and feel as well as say, " I have sinned." W. G. B.

God has so arranged and ordered all things, that His apparent change of purpose shall follow every true prayer, and His nature of love and tenderness be revealed to every humble and waiting soul. When our afflictions have wrought out in us the ends which His wisdom and mercy have sought, and have brought us in a right frame before His truth and majesty, we shall be able to discern modifications in His treatment, which are as if our God had changed His mind toward us, but which are really but changes in methods proceeding from the same mind and purpose of mercy and truth. We need all along our road in life the visitations of God's rod. God could not be a faithful and loving Father and withhold the rod. It comes in sickness, pecuniary losses, family bereavement, false accusations, and in many other ways. None of these come by chance. God is behind each, and that, too, in love. Blessed is the man who discerns this. Crosby.

David would not serve the Lord with that which cost him nothing. The thought needs only to be put in words to commend itself to every conscience. God's service is neither a form nor a sham ; it is a great reality. If we desire to show our honor for Him, it must be in a way suited to the occasion. Yet how often is God served with that which costs men nothing ! Men that will lavish hundreds and thousands to gratify their own fancy—what miserable dribblets they often give to the cause of God ! The smallest of coins is good enough for His treasury. And as for other forms of serving God, what a tendency there is in our time to make everything easy and pleasant,—to forget the very meaning of self-denial ! It is high time that that word of David were brought forth and put before every conscience, and made to rebuke ever so many professed worshippers of God, whose rule of worship is to serve God with what does cost them nothing. The very heathen re-

prove them. Little though there has been to stimulate their love, their sacrifices are often most costly—far from sacrifices that have cost them nothing. Oh, let us who call ourselves Christians beware lest we be found the meanest, paltriest of worshippers! Let souls that have been blessed as Christians devise liberal things. W. G. B.

The true *motive* to beneficence is “offering unto the Lord.” Our offerings must be gifts to the Lord. Everything in life depends on the

motive from which it springs. Man is what his motives are; he is no better and no worse. The highest and purest motive is that of doing all unto the Lord. The true *measure* of beneficence is giving that which we feel to cost us something. Giving must always be tending toward sacrifice and self-denial. Having *love* as the impulse to our benevolence, its measure will be determined by the nature of the case which appeals for our help and also by the means which God has placed at our disposal. E. Mellor.

Section 278.

ADONIJAH'S CONSPIRACY. SOLOMON ANOINTED AND PROCLAIMED KING.

1 KINGS 1 : 1-53. 1 CHRONICLES 23 : 1.

1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but
2 he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the
king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and cherish him; and let her lie in
3 thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout
4 all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And
the damsel was very fair; and she cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king
5 knew her not. Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and
6 he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had
not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he was also a very
7 goodly man; and he was born after Absalom. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah,
8 and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. But Zadok the priest,
and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the
9 mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. And Adonijah slew sheep
and oxen and fatlings by the stone of Zohemoth, which is beside En-rogel; and he called all his
10 brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: but Nathan the
11 prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. Then
Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adoni-
12 jah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? Now therefore come,
let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy
13 son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my
lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after
14 me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou
15 yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words. And
Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag
16 the Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto
17 the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? And she said unto him, My lord, thou
swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall
18 reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and
19 thou, my lord the king, knowest it not: and he hath slain oxen and fatlings and sheep in
abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the
20 captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. And thou, my lord the
king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the
21 throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the
22 king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. And,
23 lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. And they told the king,

saying, Behold, Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed
 24 himself before the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast
 25 thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? For he is gone
 down this day, and hath slain oxen and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and hath called all
 the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat
 26 and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. But me, even me thy servant, and
 Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not
 27 called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed unto thy servants
 28 who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? Then king David answered and
 said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.
 29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all ad-
 30 versity, verily as I swear unto thee by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon
 thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; verily so will I do
 31 this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king,
 32 and said, Let my lord king David live forever. And king David said, Call me Zadok the
 priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the
 33 king. And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solo-
 34 mon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: and let Zadok the
 priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trum-
 35 pet, and say, God save king Solomon. Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come
 and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be
 36 prince over Israel and over Judah. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and
 37 said, Amen: the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say so too. As the LORD hath been with
 my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of
 38 my lord king David. So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of
 Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon
 39 king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil
 out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said,
 40 God save king Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with
 41 pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. And Adoni-
 jah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And
 when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being
 42 in an uproar? While he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came:
 43 and Adonijah said, Come in; for thou art a worthy man, and bringest good tidings. And
 Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king:
 44 and the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the
 son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon
 45 the king's mule: and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in
 46 Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the
 47 noise that ye have heard. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. And
 moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, Thy God make the
 name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne: and the
 48 king bowed himself upon the bed. And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD, the
 God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.
 49 And all the guests of Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.
 50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold on the
 51 horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon:
 for, lo, he hath laid hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me
 52 this day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon said, If he shall shew
 himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness be
 53 found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar.
 And he came and did obeisance to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine
 house.

1-4. David was older at seventy than Moses | departed from his blood, it became manifest
 at a hundred and twenty; older than many | that his eventful life was drawing to its close.
 persons are now at eighty. As the vital heat | *Kit.*—The expedient recommended by David's

physicians is the regimen prescribed in similar cases still in the East, particularly among the Arab population, not simply to give heat, but "to cherish," as they are aware that the inhalation of young breath will give new life and vigor to the worn-out frame. The fact of the health of the young and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly, is well established among the medical faculty. And hence the prescription for the aged king was made in a hygeian point of view for the prolongation of his valuable life, and not merely for the comfort to be derived from the natural warmth imparted to his withered frame. *Jumieson.*

5, 6. Adonijah was at least thirty-three years old, for he was one of the six sons born in Hebron; more likely he was thirty-five or thirty-six years old, while Solomon could hardly have been more than twenty years of age. Adonijah was born shortly after Absalom, was beautiful, like his beautiful brother; like him had been indulged by a busy and lenient father, and by his wilfulness and self-ambition was as little fit to reign. *Knox.*—Like his elder brother Amnon, Adonijah had been born in Hebron; like Absalom, he was distinguished by personal attractions. But he, also, as Amnon and Absalom, had all his life been fatally indulged by David. In the expressive language of Holy Scripture: "his father had not displeased him all his days." A. E.

As Adonijah was next to Absalom both in the beauty of his body and the time of his birth, so was he, too, like him in practice. He, also, taking advantage of his father's infirmity, will be possessing himself of the kingdom of Israel. These two, Absalom and Adonijah, were the darlings of their father. Their father had not displeased them from their childhood; therefore they both displeased him in his age. Those children had need to be very gracious that are not marred with pampering. It is more than God owes us, if we receive comfort in those children whom we have over-loved. The indulgence of parents at last pays them home in crosses. *Bp. H.*—David had nobody to blame but himself for this misconduct of his son. It was his own excessive indulgence which led to this extravagance. Strange weakness in parents and cruelty to their children, to suffer them to become incorrigible in error or inveterate in vice, rather than restrain them while correction is kindness! *Delaney.*

7. The rebellion of Absalom had failed because David was in full vigor at the time and so ably supported by Abiathar the priest and

Joab the captain of the host. But Adonijah had attached these two to his interests. It is not difficult to understand the motives of Joab in trying to secure the succession for one who would owe to him his elevation, not to speak of the fact that the rival candidate for the throne was Solomon, the "man of peace," the pupil of Nathan, and the representative of the "religious party" in the land. It is not so easy to account for the conduct of Abiathar, unless it was prompted by jealousy of Zadok, who officiated at Gibeon. A. E.

The facts that David was seemingly at the point of death, and that Solomon was scarcely out of his nonage, seem to have encouraged his hope that by prompt and decisive measures he might secure the crown for himself. He felt strong in his riper years, in his right of primogeniture, in the absence of any evil design against his father, in the supposed good feeling of the people toward his claim, and in the support it had from many old servants of the State, who had been faithful to David in all his troubles. Among these were persons of no less weight than Joab, the commander of the army, and Abiathar, one of the high-priests, who, indeed, are named as his chief abettors. His policy was to anticipate Solomon, by causing himself to be proclaimed king before his father's death. It was probably calculated that David was too far gone to interfere to any purpose, and that, when the thing was done, and in favor of a son he loved so well, he would acquiesce in it as a fact accomplished. So Adonijah made a great sacrificial feast in the gardens outside Mount Zion, in which lay the fountain of En-rogel, and invited to it all the king's sons except Solomon, and all the king's servants and officers except those known to be in the interests of his young rival. Among the latter are particularly named Zadok the high-priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the captain of the guard, and the "mighty men," or select band of "worthies," of whom we have had repeated mention. The necessity for such exceptions, of which he was himself aware, was ominous for the cause of Adonijah. Not to speak of the "worthies," the influence of Zadok in the Church was at least equal to that of Abiathar: and although the name of Joab seems more than a counterbalance for that of Benaiah, yet its immediate value was probably less, as the body-guard which the latter commanded constituted the main part of the army constantly under arms and doubtless the only part then present at the capital. *Kil.*

Had not Adonijah known that Solomon was designed to the kingdom both by God and

David, he would not have invited all the rest of the king's sons and left out Solomon, who was otherwise the most unlikely to have been his competitor for the throne, since all the rest were older and might have had more pretence for their competition. *Bp. H.*

11, 12. Nathan was the man by whom God had sent that errand of grace to David concerning Solomon, assuring him both to reign and prosper; and now, when Adonijah's plot was thus on foot, he doth not sit still and depend upon the issue of God's decree, but consults with Bathsheba how at once to save their lives, and to advance Solomon and defeat Adonijah. God's pre determination includes the means as well as the end. The same providence that had ordained a crown to Solomon, a repulse to Adonijah, preservation to Bathsheba and Nathan, had fore-appointed the wise and industrious endeavors of the prophet to bring about His just and holy purposes; if we would not have God wanting to us we must not be wanting to ourselves; even when we know what God hath meant to us we may not be negligent. No more than other men did the prophets of God look for revelation in all their affairs; in some things they were left to the counsel of their own hearts. The policy of Nathan was of use as well as his prophecy. *Bp. H.*

13-43. Nathan induced Bathsheba to go and break to David a matter that so nearly concerned the interests and even safety of her son. She accordingly went to the chamber of David, and "bowed, and did obeisance unto the king." Knowing that she had not come unbidden without some important cause, he inquired her errand. The manner of the thing was much the same as when Esther appeared before the king of "a hundred and seven and twenty provinces." Thus permitted to speak, Bathsheba performed a mother's part well. She repeated what she had learned, and reminded the king of his promise that Solomon should be king after himself. When she had finished, and before David could answer, the prophet Nathan was announced, as had been arranged between him and Bathsheba, and the latter then withdrew, but remained within call. Nathan confirmed Bathsheba's statement by a more particular recital of what was going on outside the city, and asked if this was done by his authority and with his concurrence. The greatness of the exigency roused the king to clear-minded and decisive action. His body was bowed down by age and feebleness; but his mind could go forth freely and vigorously into all the circumstances, and apprehend all that so great an occasion re-

quired. He desired Bathsheba to be called in; and at once, without any question or circumlocution, pledged himself by oath to see his original intentions carried out. His words were solemn and impressive,—“As Jehovah liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I swäre unto thee, by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead, *even so will I certainly do this day.*”

Accordingly, she had no sooner departed, gladdened by the assurance, than he sent for Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, and directed them at once to mount Solomon upon his own mule of state, and to escort him, with all the royal servants and the guards, down to Gihon, which lay in the valley on the west side of the city, Adonijah's party being in the valley on the northeast. There Zadok was to anoint him king, with the sacred oil from the tabernacle, and with a royal flourish of trumpets they were to proclaim, “Long live King Solomon.” This was a sagacious and most effective movement, exactly suited to the circumstances, and shows, that while the king's natural strength was prostrated, his intellect remained quick and unclouded to the last.

All was done as the king had directed. The open march of so stately a procession, with the official sanction which the presence of the royal guards, and the king's own mule, conferred, together with the engaging youth of the prince, drew a large and popular concourse with the train to Gihon, where the inauguration took place, as David had directed. The operation was so sudden, that the city had scarcely been aware of it till the procession returned, with Solomon as king. He was then hailed by the citizens with intense acclamation. “The people piped with pipes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rung with the sound of them.” The joyful uproar in the city even reached the ears of the banqueters at En-rogel. They were not left long in doubt as to the purport of this joyous clamor; for Abiathar's son, Jonathan, came with a full account of the proceedings in the city and at Gihon. His first words must have filled them with dismay,—“Our lord king David hath made Solomon king.” *Kil.*

29. *As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even so will I certainly do this day, without dispute, without delay.* His form of swearing carries in it a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God to him in bringing him safe through the many difficulties and hardships which had lain in his way, and

which he now makes mention of to the glory of God ; thus setting to his seal, from his own experience, that that was true which the Lord spake by him (Ps. 34 : 22), *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants.* H. — Well might David, on the retrospect of a history so full as his was of trials and reverses, speak of God as He who had redeemed his soul out of all distress. It is well to mark the evangelical term here employed by him, as if affixing thereby the proper designation to that which had been done for a soul so guilty as in his Psalms he confesses himself to be. **30.** We learn directly and distinctly from his own mouth in what he said to Bathsheba, that the promise had been made to her under the sanction of an oath, in behalf of Solomon's succession to the throne—an appointment this which lay at the disposal of the reigning monarch. T. C.

32-35. David gives wise and full directions for the inauguration of Solomon ; Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the captain, receive his grave and princely charge, for the carriage of that so weighty a business. They are commanded to take with them the royal guard, to set Solomon upon his father's mule, to carry him down in state to Gihon, to anoint him with the holy oil of the tabernacle, to sound the trumpets and proclaim him in the streets, to bring him back with triumph and magnificence to the court, and to set him in the royal throne with all the due ceremonies of coronation. *Bp. II.*—Gihon was probably on the west side of the city near the head of the valley of Hinnom. Adonijah was at the foot of this valley, from a mile to a mile and a half away. The two places were thoroughly concealed from each other by the bend of the valley and its high, rocky sides. Gihon was quite near the Bethlehem gate. *Knox.*

With whatever weakness David may have been chargeable, he always rose to the requirements of the situation in hours of decisive importance, when either the known will of God or else the interests of his kingdom were in question. In this instance his measures were immediate and decisive. He sent for Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, and gave them his royal command for the immediate anointing of Solomon as king over Judah and Israel. **38-53.** The scene is vividly portrayed in Scripture. The king's body-guard—the *Cherethi* and *Pelethi*—under the command of Benaiah, was drawn up in front of the royal palace. Soon a vast concourse of people gathered. And now the king's state-mule, richly caparisoned, was brought out. It was an unwonted sight, which betokened some great state

event. Presently, the great news became known, and rapidly spread through the streets and up the bazaars—Solomon was about to be anointed king ! The people crowded together, in hundreds and thousands, from all parts of the city. And now Solomon appeared, attended by Zadok the high-priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the chief of the royal guard. The procession formed and moved forward. To avoid collision with the party of Adonijah, it took an opposite or western direction to the valley of Gihon. Here, by authority and express command of David, Solomon was anointed king with the sacred oil by the joint ministry of the high-priest and the prophet. The ceremony ended, the blast of the trumpets proclaimed the accession of the new monarch, and the people burst into a ringing shout : " God save King Solomon ! " As the procession returned, the city rang with the jubilee, till it reached the royal palace, where King Solomon seated himself in solemn state on his father's throne, and received the homage of the court, while David gave public thanks that he had lived to see that day.

Meanwhile, out in the king's gardens, the strange shouts from the city had reached Adonijah and his guests. Joab had grown uneasy as he heard the well-known sound of the trumpet. The tidings travelled quickly, and already one was in waiting to explain its meaning. But it was not as Adonijah had hoped against hope. The son of Abiathar had come to inform the conspirators of what had just taken place in Gihon and in the royal palace. And now sudden terror seized those who had but lately been so confident in their feasting. Every one of the conspirators fled, foremost among them Adonijah ; nor did he deem himself safe till he had reached the sacred precincts and laid hold on the horns of the altar. This asylum he refused to quit until Solomon had assured him by oath that his life would be spared—though on condition that his future conduct should give the king no cause for complaint. The events just recorded, which are only briefly indicated in 1 Chron. 23 : 1, were followed by a great assembly of the chief dignitaries in Church and State (1 Chron., chs. 28, 29), when the accession of Solomon to the throne was formally confirmed, and he was anointed a second time. A. E.

The dethronement of the false by the enthronement of the true. When Bathsheba and Nathan brought David news of Adonijah's revolt, and told him that Joab and Abiathar were at the coronation feast at En-rogel, it is noteworthy that the king

made no direct attack on the conspirators. He merely commanded that Solomon should be seated on the royal mule, that he should ride in state to Gihon, and that there Zadok should anoint him king, and proclaim by the sound of trumpet that he was appointed ruler. It was this which paralyzed the traitorous assembly. The sound of the trumpet was to their scheme what the blast of the rams' horns was to the walls of Jericho when they fell in irreparable ruin. David's method was the wisest, the surer; for it not only removed a present evil, but provided a future good. The lesson is obvious, and is susceptible of wide application; that the false is most surely dethroned by the enthronement of the true. *Rowland.*

Section 279.

DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE TEMPLE. HIS CHARGES TO SOLOMON: TO BUILD THE LORD'S HOUSE; TO KNOW AND SERVE JEHOVAH; TO DEAL WITH JOAB AND SHIMEI.

1 KINGS 2 : 1-9. 1 CHRONICLES 22 : 2-16 ; 23 : 1 ; 28 : 11-21.

1 Chron. 23 : 1 Now David was old and full of days ; and he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

1 Chron. 22 : 2 And David (had) commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel ; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.
 3 And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the
 4 couplings ; and brass in abundance without weight ; and cedar trees without number : for
 5 the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought cedar trees in abundance to David. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries : I will therefore make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.
 6 Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD, the
 7 God of Israel. And David said to Solomon his son, As for me, it was in my heart to build an
 8 house unto the name of the LORD my God. But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars : thou shalt not build an house
 9 unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight : behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest ; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about : for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto
 10 Israel in his days : he shall build an house for my name ; and he shall be my son, and I will
 11 be his father ; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my son, the LORD be with thee ; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as
 12 he hath spoken concerning thee. Only the LORD give thee discretion and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel ; that so thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.
 13 Then shalt thou prosper, if thou observe to do the statutes and the judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel : be strong, and of good courage ; fear not, neither be
 14 dismayed. Now, behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver ; and of brass and iron without weight ; for it is in abundance : timber also and stone have I prepared ; and thou
 15 mayest add thereto. Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and work-
 16 ers of stone and timber, and all men that are cunning in any manner of work ; of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number ; arise and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

1 Chron. 28 : 11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof,
 12 and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat : and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated

13 things : also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service
 14 of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD : of gold
 by weight for the *vessels of gold*, for all vessels of every kind of service ; of *silver* for all the
 15 vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service : by weight also for the
 candlesticks of gold, and for the lamps thereof, of gold, by weight for every candlestick and
 for the lamps thereof : and for the candlesticks of silver, *silver* by weight for *every* candlestick
 16 and for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick : and the gold by weight
 17 for the tables of shewbread, for every table ; and silver for the tables of silver : and the flesh-
 hooks, and the basons, and the cups, of pure gold : and for the golden bowls by weight for
 18 every bowl ; and for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl : and for the altar of incense
 refined gold by weight : and gold for the pattern of the chariot, *even* the cherubim, that spread
 19 out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. All this, *said David*, have
 I been made to understand in writing from the hand of the LORD, even all the works of this
 20 pattern. And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it : fear
 not, nor be dismayed : for the LORD God, even my God, is with thee ; he will not fail thee,
 21 nor forsake thee, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD be finished. And,
 behold, there are the courses of the priests and the Levites, for all the service of the house of
 God : and there shall be with thee in all manner of work every willing man that hath skill, for
 any manner of service : also the captains and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment.

1 K. 2 : 1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die ; and he charged Solomon
 2 his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth : be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a
 3 man ; and keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, *and*
 his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, according to that which is written
 in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou
 4 turnest thyself : that the LORD may establish his word which he spake concerning me, saying,
 If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with
 5 all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. Moreover thou
 knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did unto me, even what he did to the two captains
 of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom
 he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was
 6 about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom,
 7 and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. But shew kindness unto the sons of
 Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table : for so they came to me
 8 when I fled from Absalom thy brother. And, behold, there is with thee Shimei the son of
 Gera, the Benjamite, of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went
 to Mahanaim : but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD,
 9 saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless,
 for thou art a wise man ; and thou wilt know what thou oughtest to do unto him, and thou
 shalt bring his hoar head down to the grave with blood.

For long years David had been accumulating materials for the temple. From that day—about the fourteenth year of his reign—when he knew that his son would build a temple, he had kept the future building in mind. From Zobah and Syria and Ammon and Moab, from Philistines and Amalekites, had he selected precious stones out of gathered spoils. What Saul himself had dedicated to the throne and kingdom, David had rededicated to the future house. And now, in a vigorous old age, he takes up these accumulations, and the whole order of the service also, to put them into a worthy form for the temple and for future ages. *Knox.*

Since in His Providence, Jehovah pointed out the place where the Sanctuary was to be reared, David, with characteristic energy, began im-

mediate preparations for a work, the greatness of which the king measured by his estimate of Him for whose service it was designed. It almost seems as if in these arrangements all David's former vigor had come back, showing where, despite his weaknesses and failings, the king's heart really was. Besides, the youth of his son and successor Solomon, and the consideration that probably no other monarch would wield such influence in the land as he had possessed, determined David not to neglect nor defer anything that he might be able to do. A. E.

1 Chron. 22 : 1-5. The few years that remained of David's life were spent mainly in preparing for building this palace of Jehovah. A work of such magnitude and magnificence was slow of growth. Quarries had to be opened close

to the site of the building ; for there were neither roads nor rivers to transport blocks of stone in the rugged country round Jerusalem. Builders and stone-hewers, goldsmiths, joiners, and tool-makers could not easily be got, either in sufficient number or with the needful skill, in a kingdom then only rising from poverty and weakness into wealth and strength. Of timber there was plenty in the land, though the neighborhood of Jerusalem has always been bare of trees. But as the cedars and cypresses of Lebanon were alone deemed fit for the palace of Jehovah, great bodies of workmen were required to cut down the trees and convey them to Moriah. *Sime.*

5. The house must be exceeding magnificent, very stately and sumptuous, strong and beautiful, everything about it the best in its kind ; for a good reason, it was intended for the honor of the great God, the Lord of the whole earth, and was to be a type of Christ, in whom all fullness dwells and in whom are hid all treasures. Men were then to be taught by sensible methods ; the grandeur of the house would help to affect the worshippers with a holy awe and reverence of God, and would invite strangers to come to see it, as the wonder of the world, who thereby would be brought acquainted with the true God ; therefore it is here designed to be of fame and glory throughout all countries. David foretold this good effect of its being magnificent (Ps. 69 : 29), *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee.* H.

13. That David and Solomon had well-known sacred writings of Moses is affirmed in 1 K. 2 : 3 ; 1 Chron. 22 : 13 ; 16 : 40. If these statements are historical, it follows that these writings existed in the times before David. W. J. B.

—14. Although, as has been often explained, clerical errors occur in the numerals in the historical books, it may be well to give the real equivalent of the silver and gold mentioned here. Bearing in mind the distinction between the sacred and the common shekel, it would amount to under four million pounds. Immense as this sum is, Keil has shown that it is by no means out of proportion with the treasures taken as booty in antiquity. A. E.

1 Chron. 28 : 11-21. As Jehovah had given to Moses by the Spirit the pattern of the Tabernacle and its furniture, so had He intimated to David "the pattern of the Temple," in all its details of structure, contents, and service. These details he now furnishes to Solomon, with the statement (verse 19), "*All this have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of the Lord, even all the works of this pattern.*"

And he adds (verse 20) words of strong encouragement, based upon the sure promise of God's presence and help until the work of building should be completed. B.

1 K. 2 : 1-4. *A royal father's last words.* David's eventful life is drawing to a close. He has proved himself to be "a man after God's own heart." Not a *perfect* man, for he had grievous defects. But, in the main, he recognized the grandeur of his position as "the Lord's anointed." He lived by the inspiration of a Divine purpose. He "served his own generation by the will of God" (Acts 13 : 36). His very faults bore witness to the native force of his character. The height of the precipice measures the depth that frowns beneath it. Great natures are most capable of great temptations, great sorrows, and great sins. *Waite.*

He is not afraid to hear or speak of dying : *I go the way of all the earth*, (Heb.) *I am walking in it.* Death is a way ; not only a period of this life, but a passage to a better. It is *the way of all the earth*, of all mankind who dwell on earth, are themselves earth and therefore must return to their earth. Even the sons and heirs of heaven must *go the way of all the earth* ; they must needs die ; but they walk with pleasure in this way, *through the valley of the shadow of death* (Ps. 23 : 4). Prophets, and even kings, must go this way to brighter light and honor than prophecy or sovereignty. David is going this way, and therefore gives Solomon directions what to do. He charges him, in general, to keep God's commandments, and to make conscience of his duty. He prescribes to him a good rule to act by—the Divine will. "Govern thyself by that." David's charge to him is, to *keep the charge of the Lord his God*. The authority of a dying father is much, but nothing to that of a living God. There are great trusts which we are charged with by the Lord our God, let us keep them carefully as those that must give account ; and excellent statutes which we must be ruled by, let us also keep them. The written Word is our rule ; Solomon must himself do *as was written in the law of Moses*. *Be strong, and show thyself a man*, though in years but a child. Those that would keep the charge of the Lord their God, must put on resolution. The keeping of this charge would effectually conduce, *First*, To the prosperity of his kingdom ; it is the way to *prosper in all thou doest*, and to succeed with honor and satisfaction in every undertaking. *Secondly*, To the perpetuity of it ; *that the Lord may continue*, and so confirm his word, which he spake concerning me. Those that rightly value the treasure of the promise, cannot but be so-

licitous to preserve the entail of it, and very desirous that those who come after them may do nothing to cut it off. Let each, in his own age, keep God's charge, and then God will be sure to continue his word. We never let fall the promise till we let fall the precept. The promise, that there should not fail him *a man on the throne of Israel*, was conditional; if his seed behave themselves as they should. If Solomon in his day fulfil the condition, he does his part toward the perpetuating of the promise. The condition is that he walk before God in all his institutions, in sincerity, with zeal and resolution; and in order hereunto, that he *take heed to his way*. H.

2. *The necessity of personal resolution.* "Be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man." This sounds like an echo of God's own words to Joshua (1 : 7). The occasions were similar. Joshua was entering on his leadership, and Solomon was on the steps of his throne. David would evoke the manly resolution of his son. In David's sense, to show yourself a man is to prove yourself wise, valorous, virtuous, and, above all, loyal of heart to God. This exhortation, then, implies the manifestation of moral courage and strength. These are required in order to obedience, for obedience implies struggle. *There is conflict with self.* We have to check the uprising of passion, to fight against the pride which would make us refuse to submit to the revelation and to the righteousness of God. *There is resistance to the evil influences of others.* When Solomon was misled by his wives, and began to worship their gods, he was forgetting the command, "Be strong, and show thyself a man." *There is antagonism to popular customs.* In school, in business, in national policy, in Church routine, it is easier to float with the stream than to contend against it. He must needs "be strong, and show himself a man," who would say, "We must obey God rather than man!" Rowland.

3. **Take heed to the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes.** The best legacy that David bequeaths to his heir is the care of piety. Himself had found the sweetness of a good conscience, and now he commends it to his successor. If there be anything, that in our desires of the prosperous condition of our children, takes place of goodness, our hearts are not upright. Here was the father of a king, charging the king his son to keep the statutes of the King of kings; as one that knew greatness could neither exempt from obedience nor privilege sin; as one that knew the least deviation

in the greatest and highest orb is both most sensible and most dangerous. Neither would he have his son to look for any prosperity save only from well-doing: that happiness is built upon sand or ice which is raised upon any foundation besides virtue. If Solomon were wise, David was good; and if old Solomon had well remembered the counsel of old David, he had not so foully miscarried. *Bp. H.*

The assurance of resulting blessedness. "That thou mayest prosper." As an historical fact, this promise was fulfilled. The kingdom of Solomon prospered as long as he was faithful to the God of his father. His apostasy sowed the seeds of its decay. God's promises are contingent, not absolute. They have attached to them implied conditions. This, which was shown in material blessings under the covenant of the old economy, is abidingly true. It is not that man merits the blessings of God by his obedience, but that he unfits himself to receive them by disobedience. This is yet more clearly seen under the light of the new dispensation. God gives a man that which he is fit for on earth and in heaven. In and through Jesus Christ He has broadened our views of recompense. Beyond death the fulfilment of this promise extends, and he who is faithful with the few things shall be at last a ruler over many. In a spirit of humble obedience and prayerful dependence, let us seek to keep the charge and win the blessedness revealed in these dying words of the sweet singer of Israel. Rowland.

DAVID'S CHARGE RESPECTING JOAB. ITS JUSTIFICATION.

1 K. 2 : 5, 6.

5. The bloodiness of Joab had lain long upon David's heart. The hideous noise of those treacherous murders, as it had pierced heaven, so it still filled the ears of David. He could abhor the villainy, though he could not revenge it. What he cannot pay, he will owe; and approve himself at last a faithful debtor: now he will defray it by the hand of Solomon. The slaughter was of Abner and Amasa. David appropriates it; "Thou knowest what Joab did to me." *Bp. H.*

Put the blood of war upon his girdle. The plain meaning is, that he stained his clothes and armor with the blood of Abner and Amasa, his own countrymen and fellow-soldiers. *Pyle.*—It aggravated Joab's crime, that he was neither ashamed of the sin, nor afraid of the punishment, but daringly wore the girdle and shoes that were stained with inno-

cent blood, in defiance of the justice both of God and the king. H.

Joab had most deeply offended David by the twofold act of assassination perpetrated on Abner and Amasa, when he put to death the rebellious Absalom in defiance of the express command of David before the whole host, and, finally, by the conspiracy with Adonijah, so that duty enjoined the king to warn his son and successor against a man who was dangerous on account of the great consideration he enjoyed with the army. Even after the murder of Abner, David prayed for the Divine vengeance on Joab, but was himself unable to punish the crime, because the sons of Zeruiah (Joab and Abishai) were too mighty for him. But that he had only deferred the punishment and intended to remove Joab on the first opportunity from the office of commander-in-chief, is evident from the promise he gave to Amasa, the fulfilment of which Joab had frustrated by his murder. Now, as the king felt himself unable to punish this crime, he commits its punishment to his successor. This commission, therefore, for which scoffers, such as Bayle and Tindal, not merely abused David, but attacked the Bible itself, is completely justified at the bar of the strictest morals. Keil.

David has been censured for betraying a vindictive spirit in his dying advice to Solomon respecting Joab and Shimei, but his conduct appears to be perfectly justifiable. In regard to Joab, he does not advise Solomon absolutely and unconditionally to put him to death, but tells him to "do according to his wisdom;" he says to him, "Though you have now pardoned Joab through policy, as I was compelled to do myself by the exigency of the times, and the predominant influence of the sons of Zeruiah; yet, should he offend again, act according to your discretion, and then punish him, as a hoary-headed murderer and a confirmed traitor, with death." Hales.

The advice now given by David cannot be deemed inconsistent with true piety, or unworthy of a just and religious prince on his death-bed. It is true that forgiveness of enemies is a duty; but no man is obliged, by any law that we know of, so to forgive an enemy, continuing such, as not to take the proper methods to guard against the effects of his enmity, and to bring him to justice, if no other method will prove effectual. Much less is a prince obliged so to forgive an implacable enemy to his crown and government, and one who is likely to disturb the settlement of the crown in his successor, as not to advise his successor

to be on his guard against him, and to punish him, when guilty, according to his demerits. Such precaution as this he owes to his people; and he may die, as a private person, in charity with all mankind, and forgive every private injury against himself; and yet, as a prince, he may advise what is necessary for the public good, and even the execution of particular persons, in case they should, by abusing the lenity of government, and the respite they once obtained, become guilty of new and capital offences. Chandler.

The sentiment continually set forth in the Old Testament is, that innocent blood cries to God from the ground for vengeance; and that, if suffered to go unpunished, it brings down a curse and judgment upon the land. Let us look at some texts enforcing the view which both David and Solomon were bound to take of this matter. "If a man come presumptuously on his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die" (Ex. 21 : 14). This exactly met the case of both murders by Joab; and the neglect of a rule so plain, and so stringently stated, might well appear as a perilous neglect of public duty. Again: "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death" (Nu. 35 : 31). After a similar injunction in De. 19 : 13, it is added, "Thine eye shall not pity him: but thou shalt put away the guill of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee." Look, also, to the case of Manasseh, whose punishment and captivity is mainly ascribed to "the innocent blood which he shed (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood), which the Lord would not pardon" (2 K. 24 : 4). That this point of view was present to the mind of David, and influenced his conduct, is very clear; for, at the very time of Abner's murder, he publicly implored that the judgment of this innocent blood might be averted from his house and kingdom, and that it might rest upon Joab and upon his house. This, in fact, was formally reserving Joab for the future judgment which he then felt powerless to execute. Besides this, it must not be overlooked that the recent terrible judgment upon the land, on account of the long-past destruction of the Gibeonites by Saul, was well calculated to enforce these views, and give great intensity to David's apprehensions of the consequences to the realm of these crimson sins of Joab being much longer suffered to pass unpunished. If this state of the case be correct, and we are persuaded that it is, no excuse for David's conduct in this matter is required; but

he was rather—under the views he was bound to entertain—not only blameless, but laudable, and entirely in accordance with his duty as a king and a father. *Kit.*

How would David have been acquitted of the charge of injustice if he had suffered such public and crying offences to pass wholly unpunished? He discharges his conscience by the advice which he gives to Solomon. Not having been able in his lifetime to complete all that justice required of him, he charged his son to execute what remained. He spoke as a king and as a judge, whose duty it was to punish crime, not as a private individual following the dictates of revenge. Joab had been so powerful a man with the army, that David, during his lifetime, durst not call him to account; but, when Solomon began to reign, the continuance of profound peace had impaired Joab's power, by rendering his services useless. Solomon, therefore, had no reason to dread his influence, and was enabled to bring him to that punishment which justice demanded. *Culmet.*

In regard to matters Divine and spiritual, only one plain advice need he give to Solomon. Spiritual decidedness, faithfulness, and obedience to God: such simply were the means by which the promises given to David and his house would be inherited. But all the greater were the political dangers which beset the path of the youthful kin: an unscrupulous military party, headed by Joab; a dissatisfied priestly faction, ready to plot and join any rebellious movement; and ill-suppressed tribal jealousies, of whose existence Shimei had, at a critical period, given such painful evidence. The leaders of two of these parties had long forfeited their lives; indeed, only the necessities of the time could have excused either the impunity with which Joab's treachery and his murder of Abner and Amasa had been passed over, or the indulgence extended to such conduct as that of Shimei. It was not, as some would have us believe, that on his death-bed David gave utterance to those feelings of revenge which he was unable to gratify in his lifetime, but that, in his most intimate converse with his son and successor, he looked at the dangers to a young and inexperienced monarch from such powerful and unscrupulous partisans. In these circumstances it was only natural that, before dying, he should have given to his son and successor such advice for his future guidance as his long experience would suggest; and similarly that, in so doing, he should have reviewed the chief dangers and difficulties which had beset his own path, and have referred to the great public crimes which,

during his reign, had necessarily been left unpunished. The fact that, even before his death, an attempt had been made to elevate Adonijah to the throne, contrary alike to the known will of God and the appointment of David, and that the chief actors in this had been Joab and Abiathar, must have recalled the past to his mind, and shown him that the fire had been smouldering these many years, and might at any time burst into flame. *A. E.*

Adonijah alone was harmless, and might be left to Solomon in his youth. Only when supported by designing and wily men would he be strong. Abiathar was already removed from his position of power. Joab only was a strong, bold man, confirmed through a long life in a vindictive habit of mind, whose very defeat now would provoke resentment against the new king. He that slew Abner in treachery, he that slew Absalom in defiance of the king's command, he that slew Amasa in malicious jealousy, deserved before to die for his crimes, but he had now added to all these the direct treason of stimulating and supporting Adonijah. If he had done this in revenge upon David for displacing him from the army, he certainly would attempt some traitorous counter-check to Solomon's succession. Had not his impious will driven often headlong over his kind-hearted king, at times when Joab could plausibly justify his deeds by political necessity, long since would he have been brought to justice. It was right that he should die. It was not only right, it was necessary. Holiness and truth demanded it. Such riot over right government, such examples of rash and murderous impatience, by a bold will, set the example of lawlessness everywhere, to bold, unscrupulous men, on the accession of a new king. *Knox.*

David knew Joab's ability and determination to accomplish any purpose on which his heart was set; and that foul means came to his hand as readily as fair. Benaiah might any day share Amasa's fate, and Solomon meet Absalom's. To us, who know that these things did not happen, Joab may seem to have got scant justice from David. But to David such an upturning of his own arrangements, especially when he was dead, seemed both possible and likely. In the meridian of David's life Joab paid no attention to the sovereign's wishes when they crossed his own; the death of David would render him more unscrupulous than ever. Benaiah, long his own inferior, had been raised over his head. Solomon, a boy-king at the best, had dared to cast on him a disgrace which the wise and cautious David had been twice baffled in attempt-

ing. An affront so galling Joab would resent, to the ruin of his adversaries, as soon as he got the chance. And as he had the will, it was hard to tell whether he had not also the power. Abiathar, the high-priest, was a good right-hand man to parade before the army and the nation. Adonijah was not stained with blood as Absalom had been; and, among a people who were taught by long-established law and custom to respect the birthright of the eldest son, could plead a better title to the crown than Solomon. Shimei, the known enemy of David, was a man of great influence in Benjamin. Were these enemies of Solomon to join in united action, or were any slip in policy to put the young king in the wrong before the nation, he might have to maintain his position by arms; perhaps he might suddenly meet the fate of Amnon or Absalom. It is no injustice to Joab, and it is but fair to David, to consider that Adonijah's party had not lost hope of redressing their wrongs. These fears, imparted to David and justified by events after his death, explain his dying charge, and fully account for the cruelty that it seems to breathe. An appearance of cruelty toward Joab and Shimei may rather have been truest kindness toward Nathan, Benaiah, Zadok, and Solomon. To order a man's death is in itself a cruel thing; but it is infinitely less cruel, and it is vastly more wise, to order an intriguer's death than to leave it in his power, by murder or assassination, to throw a kingdom into disorder, to pervert the course of justice, and perhaps to plunge the people in civil war. *Sime.*

7. *Charge respecting the sons of Barzillai.* Generous natures cannot be unthankful: Barzillai had showed David great kindness in his extremity; and now the good man will have posterity to inherit the thanks. How much more bountiful is the Father of Mercies, in the remuneration of our poor unworthy services! Even successions of generations shall fare the better for one good parent. *Bp. H.*—Remembering the injuries that had been done, he could not forget the kindnesses that had been shown, but leaves it as a charge upon his son to return them. The kindnesses we have received from our friends must not be buried either in their graves or ours, but our children must return them to theirs. Hence, perhaps, Solomon fetched that rule (Prov. 27:10), *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.* *H.*

Charge Respecting Shimei.

Verses 8, 9.

The mention of Absalom, and those terrible

days of revolt and anarchy when he was constrained to flee for his life, seems to have reminded the dying king of one of the bitterest ingredients of that bitter cup of shame and suffering—the cruel curses of Shimei. He remembers that the sin of Shimei, which was nothing else than treason and blasphemy, has so far escaped punishment. In a moment of generous enthusiasm he had included Shimei in the general amnesty which he proclaimed on his return. He had thought, no doubt, at the time, only of the offence against himself; he had forgotten his sacred and representative character as “the Lord's anointed;” or, if he had remembered it, the emotions of that memorable day had obscured or perverted his sense of justice and duty. But he has since realized—and the thought weighs upon his conscience in the chamber of death—that he then pardoned what he had no power to pardon—viz., a sin to which the Mosaic law attached the penalty of death. For blasphemy, as for murder, there was no expiation short of the death of the blasphemer (Lev. 24:14-16; cf. 1 K. 21:10, 13); and blasphemy, like murder, though not perhaps to the same extent, involved those who heard it in its guilt, until they had discharged themselves of their sin upon the head of the guilty (Lev. 24:14; cf. Lev. 5:1). But Shimei, so far from having suffered the penalty of the law, had been twice protected against it; twice preserved alive, in defiance of law, by the supreme magistrate, the executor of law. And David, who has been charging his son to keep the law, now realizes that he himself has been a law-breaker. He has kept his oath, sworn to his own or his people's hurt, and he will keep it to the end. But Solomon is under no such obligation. He can demand the long arrears of justice, none the less due because of the time that has elapsed, and this David charges him to do. *Hammond.*

As it stands, the sense appears to be this: David intends to warn Solomon against Shimei, as a dangerous subject prone to break out into disaffection, and whose power of doing harm required that he should be carefully watched. He himself had, for reasons of policy, and in consideration of his meeting him, with a large body of Benjamites, at the Jordan, pardoned him for his gross and treasonable insults at Bahurim. Solomon, however, was not bound to regard him as altogether expurgated from that crime; and, should he be detected in any new offence against himself, he was advised not to excuse and pardon him, as his father had done. And we think that a prudential regard for the safety

of that son's reign, in warning him against dangerous persons, was the predominant motive of his counsel, and the only motive of which he was himself conscious. *Kit.*

When David here says (verse 8), "I swear to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword," he means by the sword of Abishai, who wanted immediately to kill him. The oath, in strictness, was nothing more than a respite from death *that day*, and did not preclude his future punishment if he should deserve it by a fresh offence, as he probably did in Adonijah's rebellion; for it was not till after the execution of Adonijah and Joab, that Solomon sent for Shimei, and ordered him to reside in Jerusalem, and not to quit the city under pain of death on the day that he should pass over the brook Kidron. A condition which Shimei thankfully accepted: "The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do." And this measure was evidently dictated by David's advice; on the meaning of which, therefore, it forms the best comment: "And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, now therefore hold him not guiltless;" but guard him as a disaffected and dangerous Benjamite, and confine him to Jerusalem, lest he kindle rebellion among the tribes, by stirring up their minds, like Sheba: "for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him," in order to prevent his cabals; and if he offend again, "bring down his hoar head to the grave with blood," for your own security, and the peace of your kingdom; for his crimes deserve death. *Hales.*—His case is left with Solomon, as one that knew what was fit to be done, and would do as he found occasion. David intimates to him, that his pardon was not designed to be perpetual, but only a reprieve for David's life; "*Hold him not guiltless*: do not think him any true friend to thee or thy government, or fit to be trusted; he has no less malice than he had then, though he has more wit to conceal it. He is still a debtor to the public justice for what he did then; and though I promised him that I would not put him to death, I never promised that my successor should not. His turbulent spirit will soon give thee an occasion, which thou shouldest not fail to take, for bringing of his *hoary head to the grave with blood.*" This proceeded not from personal revenge, but a prudent zeal for the honor of the government, and the covenant God had made with his family, the contempt of which ought not to go unpunished. Even a hoary head, if a guilty and forfeited head, ought not to be any man's protection from justice. *The sinner being*

an hundred years old shall be accursed (Is. 65 : 20). *H.*

Although David had forgiven Shimei the personal wrong, yet as king and representative of the Divine right in the theocracy, he had not forgiven the crime of high treason of which Shimei had become guilty by reviling the Lord's anointed, and according to theocratic right could not forgive it, because the Lord himself was insulted in his anointed. But the following words, "for thou art a wise man," as well as Solomon's treatment of Shimei, indicate very emphatically that David and Solomon had no confidence in the disposition of Shimei. Accordingly, in this charge David is to be acquitted, not only of personal vindictiveness, but of every injustice. The punishment of Shimei was the duty of the theocratic ruler, for "Shimei was a blasphemer against the chosen of God, and his repentance was not genuine." *Keil.* —Shimei is and remains a proof rather of David's magnanimity than of his vindictiveness. To endure the miscreant all his life in his neighborhood (there was nothing even said of banishment) was no small thing. To suffer him to close his days unmolested under another reign also (which was never promised him) would have been a boon which would have given a very injurious example of unpunished transgression. *Hess.*

That the man who, in his opening words (verse 3), enjoined upon his son, in the most emphatic manner, a strict and literal obedience to the law of Heaven, should in these subsequent words, delivered almost in the same breath, require him to satiate a long-cherished and cruel revenge upon Joab and Shimei (the latter of whom he had twice delivered from death), is an instance of self-contradiction which is almost, if not quite, without parallel. But it is a superficial and entirely erroneous view of David's last words, which supposes them to have been inspired by malice or cruelty. His absorbing idea was clearly this, that he had not "kept the charge of the Lord;" that he, the chief magistrate, the "revenger to execute wrath," by sparing Joab and Shimei, the murderer and the blasphemer, both of whose lives were forfeited to justice, had failed in his duty, had weakened the sanctions of law, and compromised the honor of the Most High. He is too old and too weak to execute the sentence of the law now, but for the safety of his people, for the security of his throne, it must be done, and therefore Solomon, who was under no obligation to spare the criminals his father had

spared, must be required to do it. Of the Jewish king it might be said with a special propriety, "*Rex est lex loquens*," and seldom has the voice of law spoken with greater dignity and fidelity than by David in this dying charge. *Hammond.*

Section 280.

DAVID'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATION. HE URGES OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, AND A HEARTY CO-OPERATION WITH SOLOMON IN THE BUILDING OF THE LORD'S HOUSE. AFTER WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE SOLOMON IS FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, AND AGAIN ANOINTED KING.

1 CHRONICLES 22 : 17-19 ; 28 : 1-10 ; 29 : 1-22.

1 Chron. 28 : 1 AND David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that served the king by course, and the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officers, and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of
2 valor, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people : as for me, it was in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the foot-stool of our God ; and I had made ready for the
3 building. But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou
4 art a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever : for he hath chosen Judah to be prince ; and in the house of Judah, the house of my father ; and among the sons of my father
5 he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel : and of all my sons (for the LORD hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom
6 of the LORD over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and
7 my courts : for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at
8 this day. Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God : that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.
9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind : for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : if thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake
10 him, he will cast thee off forever. Take heed now ; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary : be strong, and do it.

22 17 David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*,
18 Is not the LORD your God with you ? and hath he not given you rest on every side ? for he hath delivered the inhabitants of the land into mine hand ; and the land is subdued before
19 the LORD, and before his people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek after the LORD your God ; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

29 1 And David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great : for the palace is not for man,
2 but for the LORD God. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the *things of gold*, and the silver for the *things of silver*, and the brass for the *things of brass*, the iron for the *things of iron*, and wood for the *things of wood* ; onyx stones, and stones to be set, stones for inlaid work, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and
3 marble stones in abundance. Moreover also, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house
4 of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house ; even three thousand

talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay
 5 the walls of the houses withal : of gold for the *things* of gold, and of silver for the *things* of
 silver, and for all manner of work *to be made* by the hands of artificers. Who then offereth
 6 willingly to consecrate himself this day unto the LORD? Then the princes of the fathers'
houses, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds,
 7 with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly ; and they gave for the service of the
 house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand darics, and of silver ten thousand
 8 talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and of iron a hundred thousand talents. And
 they with whom *precious* stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the
 9 LORD, under the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for that they
 offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD : and David
 10 the king also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congrega-
 tion : and David said, Blessed be thou, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and
 11 ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the
 majesty : for all that is in the heaven and in the earth *is thine* ; thine is the kingdom, O LORD,
 12 and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest
 over all ; and in thine hand is power and might ; and in thine hand it is to make great, and
 13 to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious
 14 name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly
 15 after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are
 strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were : our days on the earth are as a
 16 shadow, and there is no abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to
 17 build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know
 also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the
 uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things : and now have I seen with
 18 joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O LORD, the God of
 Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the
 19 thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee : and give unto Solomon
 my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to
 20 do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision. And David
 said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed
 the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD,
 21 and the king. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings unto
 the LORD, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a
 22 thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel ; and did
 eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the
 son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the LORD to be prince, and Zadok
 to be priest.

The sudden inauguration of Solomon little comported with the aged king's conception of the dignity due such an occasion. Solomon had only been made king in Jerusalem, and it was not only fitting, but essential, that the nation should participate and consent in the compact. There were grave matters, also, intrusted to the future reign which should be well advanced by public solemnities before the assembled nation. Solomon was a young man to be a king over such a people—ten years younger than David when he began at Hebron. The kingdom needed to be compacted about him before the aged monarch should sleep. The king therefore determined on a grand national occasion in which God and his house should be honored and in which Solomon should be formally anointed and acknowledged as king. *Knox.*

This was David's last public appearance and his last kingly act. The chief theme of this farewell address was that which had been so long upon his heart, the building of the sanctuary of Jehovah. B.

David did more for the temple than merely to heap up gold, brass, and cedars. He charged his noblest son with the responsibility of pushing the enterprise to its completion. More than this, he breathed the lofty enthusiasm of his own great soul into his officers and princes. To Solomon he said (in substance) : My son, it was an object dear to my heart to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God. But the Lord said to me : "Thou hast been a man of war and blood, and mayest not build it ; I will give thee a son, a man of peace and rest ; he shall build the house." Now, my son, the Lord

has given thee this high honor ; be strong and of good courage ; arise, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee. His words to his princes, exhorting them to aid Solomon, are full of vigorous inspiration : “ Is not the Lord your God with you ? Hath he not given you rest on every side ? Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Arise, therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord ” (1 Chron. 22 : 17-19). And, as we here read, 1 Chron. 28 and 29 are full of this inspiring theme. David convenes his princes and officers, military and civil ; declares to them his own strong desire to build a temple for God ; rehearses the words of the Lord to him denying him this privilege, but not debarring him from the honor and joy of making immense provisions for it. He commits the work to his son Solomon. Then turning to Solomon, he exhorts him in their presence to seek the will of God with all diligence ; to know the God of his fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. In commending his son to the sympathy and aid of his numerous officers, he takes occasion to refer to the immense stores which he had accumulated and consecrated to this great work of which much had been drawn from his own private fortune (29 : 2-5) ; and then makes his warm appeal to them for their benefactions : “ Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord ? ” The chief officers, the princes, captains, and men in authority, responded promptly and nobly. As the record has it, “ they offered willingly ; ” and more than this, they gave till the joy of giving became a thrilling luxury : “ Then the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly to the Lord ; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy ” (verse 9). Such an inspiration of giving brought God very near both to David and to his people, so that David's soul poured itself forth spontaneously in one of the most remarkable thanksgiving prayers on record. Then a response from the people was in place. David said to all the congregation : “ Now bless the Lord your God ; ” and all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord. Giving careful attention to this thanksgiving prayer, we shall readily note the deep sense it expresses of God's greatness and excellent glory ; the transition from this to the littleness of man and of themselves ; their appreciation of the high honor granted them to have and to know such a God

and to feel that all their good comes from him ; the joy of their hearts in giving back so much of their treasure to build an house for his name — all they have being truly his own ; and coupled with this a rich, refreshing sense of having consecrated this wealth to God with an honest and willing mind. Noticeably it did not abate from the joy of this consecration and thanksgiving prayer to think that this God to whom they offer both their gold and their prayer knows all hearts and will witness to their sincerity. The climax of their joy seems to lie in this deep consciousness of being whole-hearted and thoroughly sincere in this entire service. Fitly this prayer closed with the petition—May God's grace perpetuate this spirit of consecration forever ! “ O Lord, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and hold their hearts steadfast to thyself, and give to Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments and to build the palace for which I have made provision ” (verses 18, 19). This was one of the last great efforts of the aged king, before he should lay down his earthly work to die, and one of the noblest. A grander example of munificent benefaction—of giving with the whole heart, when has the world ever seen ? H. C.

1 Chron. 28 : 1. *The grand assembling of Israel for the public investiture of Solomon with the throne of the Kingdom.* Previously, at Gihon, by David's command, he had been anointed and proclaimed ruler over Israel and Judah. But that was only David's act, although guided by the specific directions of Jehovah. In accordance with God's own plan of governing the nation, the choice and act of the people by their representatives were essential to confirm and establish a ruler in the kingdom. So had it been with Saul, and with David at Hebron and at Jerusalem. David therefore summons a supreme assembly of authorized representatives from the whole kingdom : priests, prophets, princes, and military leaders ; men of all high offices, and of renown for valor. He gathers them in grand and solemn convocation not only that they may ratify and personally accept the Divine appointment of Solomon as King, but that they may receive his farewell words of counsel. The event was one of intense and mingled feeling, as the old monarch, “ full of days, riches, and honor,” rose from his resting-couch to utter his parting exhortation ! B.

2. It may appear singular that David at the first anointing of Solomon should be in his chamber, and on his bed, and exceedingly decrepit ; and yet, at this second anointing, should

be in the midst of his princes and counsellors, and standing on his feet. But David's present infirmity was not sickness, but the coldness and numbness of old age. He was heart-whole and head-whole. Therefore upon such an occasion as the crowning of Solomon again before all Israel, he was able to come forth and stand upon his feet, and give his advice respecting future proceedings. *Dr. Lightfoot.*

2, 3. *David speaks first of the House of God.* This was uppermost in his mind, as the thought of it had occupied his heart and hand for a long period of years. He says nothing of what he had *done* in constructing a compact, powerful nation out of feeble, separated tribes, and organizing all departments of a healthy, vigorous national life. He has no thought for all the splendid victories he had achieved in leading Israel; for the magnificence of the capital he had created; for any personal successes or trials. Nor speaks he of those matchless songs of praise and penitence, of trust and hope and prayer, which God had inspired his heart to conceive and his pen to express. Himself, his work of every sort, utterly forgotten, even as he faces that work in the retrospect of that solemn hour before the gathered nation; his only thoughts are of God and His House, of God's choices and plans, of the people's future and of Solomon's, as related to obedience and trust toward God. God and His House he speaks of first. Addressing them in touching terms of affection, as *my brethren, my people*, he declares his own longing, for years upon years, to build a place of rest, whereupon, as upon a footstool, the ark of the covenant, the symbol of God's presence, might rest. But God had declined his service, because it was not fitting that a man of war should build the Temple of the Prince of Peace. There is no question or complaint concerning this in David's heart. On the contrary, he instantly goes on to declare how the sovereign grace of God had wrought everything concerning himself.

4-7. *David honors God's sovereignty in his own kingship and in Solomon's succession and buildership of the Temple.* In the beautiful humility which characterized him as a youth, and which never left him, he utterly forgets every consideration of personal merit, while averring that *God had chosen* his tribe, his family, himself, and Solomon for the throne. And with an equally beautiful simplicity he refers to God's choice of Solomon as the builder, and gladly surrenders to him all the plans and material upon which he has spent the labor of years. He further testifies to the promise of God to give per-

manence to Solomon's kingdom, if King and people are constant in their fidelity to the Divine commandments and judgments. Then very naturally follows a solemn charge to people and King.

8. *David charges the people to keep and seek God's commands.* Formally appealing to the present listening God, and to the great assembly representing all Israel, as witnesses against the whole people if they despise his counsel, he exhorts them to obey the voice of Jehovah. His counsel is broad and full. Not only *keep all known* commands, but *seek* by earnest inquiry to know, that you may do, all His yet unrevealed will. And upon this cordial, steadfast obedience to God, he declares, will depend their continuance, and their children's inheritance, in the goodly land of their fathers. This is the *single* condition, be it noted, that runs through the entire series of Jehovah's promises from the call of Abraham onward. And this condition is as personal as it is national. To Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to Moses, to Saul, and David, it had been spoken and fulfilled. B.—*Keep and seek for, all the commandments of the Lord your God.* The Lord was their God, his commandments must be their rule, they must have respect to them all, must make conscience of keeping them, and, in order thereunto, must seek for them—that is, must be inquisitive concerning their duty; search the Scriptures, take advice, seek the law at *their* mouth whose lips were to keep this knowledge, and pray to God to teach and direct them. He charges them in the sight of all Israel, who would all have notice of this public charge, and in the audience of their God. God is witness, and this congregation is witness, that they have good counsel given them, and fair warning; if they do not take it, it is their fault, and God and man will be witnesses against them. H.

9, 10. *Charge to Solomon.* Next, in Jehovah's name, the royal father solemnly utters a charge to his youthful son. In the presence of this august assembly of the nation he declares that the obligation of loyalty to God rests mutually upon king and people, and that the disobedience of either will bring the forfeiture of promised blessing. Other words of parting counsel, of similar import, the aged father had spoken in private. These included all that was vital to success and continuance. Although strictly personal, David uttered them in the audience of the people, that the impression upon Solomon might thus be deepened. As Solomon was witness to the charge they had received, so they were witnesses to these solemn words addressed

to him. The charge, or counsel, is twofold, as are the reasons by which it is enforced. *Know thou God!* The meaning is, acquaint thyself with Him through all the methods by which He has declared himself and invited communion with Him. Recognize Him in all that He is, acknowledge Him in all that He does, gratefully accept all that He bestows, and with reverent filial spirit respond to His proffered fellowship. And to this knowledge of God, by personal recognition and intercourse, add a *complete and gladly obedient service!* Wholeness, singleness, sincerity, and heartiness are here indicated as the qualities of loyal and acceptable service to God. Half-effort, divided purpose, a half-truth, and a half-heart will not suffice for that loyalty and obedience which God justly demands. Note now the *order* as well as the *substance* of the reasons or arguments by which the charge is enforced. First, God is *always searching the heart*, discerning the secret motive and character of every purpose, word, and deed, measuring and testing each with the standard qualities upon which His approval and acceptance is based. This ceaseless minute inspection of God is the foremost consideration by which David impresses the obligation to that singleness and entireness of heart obedience which produces loyal service. Next, he enforces his counsel by the *consequences* of thus seeking or of forsaking God. Seeking God, He will be found, and His blessing will insure all needed guidance and favor and success. Forsaking God, He will cast off forever. All His promises will be forfeited and annulled, His aid and blessing will be withdrawn. In this whole charge of David to Solomon, including the counsel to know and serve God, with the reasons assigned, how evidently does he speak out of his own long and deep experience! His charge is more than mere wise counsel to the son who succeeds to the cares and responsibilities of the government. It is a *testimony* also, enforcing the counsel by the intense concentration of memory and feeling upon all the happy and sad results of his own checkered life. With all the force of his own experience he urges upon this beloved son to take heed to these sure tried truths, and to *be strong* in doing the work assigned him by *the choice and direction* of Israel's covenant God. Never was this injunction fully and heartily obeyed. After a brief period, it was deliberately disobeyed. Hence the consequences, of which he was so frequently and solemnly forewarned, came upon him. Forgetting, deserting, contemning God, he was abandoned of God. If saved in the end, it was from God's regard for His covenant with David.

A great practical truth lies in this counsel and charge to Solomon. No force of emphasis too strong or earnest can be used in its application. It expresses the single comprehensive duty of man, and the supreme motives to human conduct which God himself assigns throughout His word. It speaks alike to young and old. Of each God demands acknowledgment, acquaintance, the search for a deeper knowledge of Him, and the practice of a closer communion with Him. Of each He asks a service that is wholehearted and thoroughly unselfish, a life that is pure and true coming out of a spirit that is supremely loyal and beneficent as His own. To one thus seeking to know Him, to be like Him, and to conform the whole life to His will, His promises are inexpressibly full and precious. But, let it be ever remembered, God's promises are invariably *conditioned* upon our loyalty in heart and life. To the end it is so. The filial spirit must continue filial. Trust in Christ must remain unbroken. The worship of prayer, and praise, and devout meditation, and the consecration of all we have and are, must be continuous throughout the life. Then the promises are verified in augmenting blessings. Otherwise they are forfeited and annulled.

1 Chron. 22 : 17-19. Charge to the people to help Solomon in building the sanctuary of the Lord God. Since the Lord your God has given you rest in the undisturbed possession of the land, "Now set your heart to seek after Him, arise and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord your God." Here, as everywhere, the command is based upon the single supreme consideration and motive, the abounding undeserved goodness of God in the complete fulfilment of oft-repeated promises to their fathers.

1 Chron. 29 : 1-5. David refers to his own preparation and offering for the Temple Building, and solicits their generous contributions. Note especially the touching expression in which he refers to his own personal and most kingly gift (verse 3). **Because I have set my affection unto the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house.** The vast store of material, useful and costly metals and precious stones, referred to in verse 2, comprised spoils of warfare as well as profits from public revenues, which he had accumulated for long years; for ultimate use in the Temple structure. In announcing to them his own personal offering of his private estate, his manifest purpose is, not to boast (for he

gives from "affection," not ostentation), but to incite the princes and leaders of the people, men of influence and wealth, to give liberally in their offerings. For immediately he puts the emphatic, stirring appeal, **Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto the Lord?** Literally, "*to fill his hands,*" to come with full hands unto Jehovah. He asks not only a free-will but an abundant and generous offering. B.

We must, each of us, in our several places, serve the Lord, and consecrate our service to him, separate it from other things that are foreign, and interfere with it, and direct and design it for the honor and glory of God. We must make the service of God our business; must *fill our hands to the Lord*, so the Hebrew phrase is. They who engage themselves in the service of God will have their hands full; there is work enough for the whole man in that service. The filling of our hands with the service of God intimates that we must serve him only, serve him liberally, and serve him in the strength of grace derived from him. We must be free herein, do it willingly and speedily, do it this day, when we are in a good mind. Who is willing? Let him show it, now and always.

6-9. How handsomely they all contributed toward the building of the temple, when they were thus stirred up to it. Though they were persuaded to it; yet it is said, *They offered willingly* (verse 6). So *He* said, who knew their hearts. Nay, they offered with a perfect heart, from a good principle, and with a sincere respect to the glory of God (verse 9). How generous they were, appears by the sum total of the contributions (verses 7, 8). They gave like princes, the princes of Israel. H.

10-19. *David's sublime ascription of thankful praise to Jehovah.* The joy of the people, because of their felt and conscious liberality, and the reflex joy of the king in the observation of it, are both most natural; and the outpouring of the monarch's soul is in perfect keeping with the sentiments by which he was actuated, and which are here ascribed to him. It is a very clear and substantial prayer; and such as would be uttered in the same circumstances by the most advanced and enlightened Christians of the present day. There is in it a noble strain of adoration—the ascription of all might and supremacy to God—the expression both of entire gratitude and of entire dependence—not the elation, but the humility awakened by what they had done and rendered in the cause of the Divine Being, because endowed from on high with the ability and the willingness thus to acquit themselves—

the recognition of God as the spring and fountain-head of all their wealth, whereof they were only the temporary holders, so that they had but given to God that which was His own—the joyful sympathy which he felt in the kindred dispositions and offerings of the people—and, finally, his prayer both for them and for Solomon his son. Altogether, it is a most precious and heart-stirring composition. T. C.

He adores God, and ascribes glory to him, as the God of Israel, *blessed forever and ever*. This is properly praising God, with holy awe and reverence, and agreeable affection, acknowledging not only that he is great, powerful, glorious, but that his is the greatness, power, and glory—that is, he has them in and of himself; he is the Fountain and Centre of everything that is bright and blessed. All that we can, in our most exalted praises, attribute to him, he has an unquestionable title to. He acknowledges with thankfulness the grace of God enabling them to contribute so cheerfully toward the building of the temple (verse 13): *Now therefore, our God, we thank thee*. The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for the honor of being employed in his service, and for grace enabling us, in any measure, to serve him. He thanks God that they were *able to offer so willingly*. It is a great instance of the power of God's grace in us to be able to do the work of God willingly. We must give God all the glory of all the good that is at any time done by ourselves or others. Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor the good works of others the matter of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise. He speaks very humbly of himself, and his people, and the offerings they had now presented to God. For himself, and those that joined with him, though they were princes, he wondered that God should take such notice of them, and do so much for them (verse 14): *Who am I, and what is my people?* David was the most honorable person, and Israel the most honorable people then in the world; yet thus does he speak of himself and them, as unworthy the Divine cognizance and favor. H.

"*We have given thee of thine own,*" says David. So, Christian, do thou say, "Lord, the love with which I love thee is thine own; and the faith by which I hang upon thee is thine own; and the fear by which I fear before thee is thine own; and the joy with which I rejoice before thee is thine own; and the patience with which I wait upon thee is thine own." T. Brooks.

15. We are strangers before thee, and sojourners: our days are as a

shadow, and there is no abiding.

David intimates that our life is a vain life, a dark life, a transient life, and a life that will have its period either in perfect light or perfect darkness. The next words explain it, *There is no abiding*, Heb. *no expectation*. We cannot expect any great matters from it, nor can we expect any long continuance of it. This is mentioned here, as that which forbids us to boast of the service we do to God: alas! it is confined to a scantling of time, it is the service of a frail and short life, and therefore what can we pretend to merit by it? H.—Never did the Jewish nation appear to be more at home than at that time. As for David, his happiness was so complete, that, instead of asking any additional favors, he could hardly find words to express his gratitude for those he had already received. Yet, amid all his affluence, when he possessed every outward comfort his heart could wish, still he called himself a *stranger* and a *sojourner* before God. In his most prosperous condition, he did not look upon this earth as his home, but extended his views to the heavenly world, that glorious and permanent inheritance of the saints, which is “incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away.” *R. Walker*.

16. It cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. “We have it from thee as a free gift, and therefore are bound to use it for thee; and what we present to thee is but rent or interest from thine own.” “In like manner” (says Bishop Patrick), “we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things, referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his grace, from whom we receive it.”

17. He appeals to God concerning his own sincerity in what he did. It is a great satisfaction to a good man to think that God *tries the heart*, and *has pleasure in uprightness*; that whoever misinterpret or condemn it, he is acquainted with, and approves of, the *way of the righteous*. It was David’s comfort that God knew with what pleasure he both offered his own, and saw the people’s offering. He was neither proud of his own good work nor envious of the good works of others.

18. He prays to God both for the people and for Solomon, that both might hold on as they began. In this prayer he addresses himself to God, as *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, a God in covenant with them, and with us for their sakes. Lord, give us grace to make good our part of the covenant, that we may not forfeit the benefit of it. They were kept in their integrity by the grace of God establishing their way; let the same grace that was sufficient for

them be so for us. For the people he prays that what good God had put into their minds he would always keep there, that they might be faithful to him and continue to enjoy his favor. H.

20. Then, at David’s bidding, the vast congregation “blessed the Lord, the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord.” B.

21. The next day they offered abundance of sacrifices to God, both burnt-offerings which were wholly consumed, and peace-offerings which the offerer had the greatest part of to himself. Hereby they testified a generous gratitude to God for the good posture their public affairs were in, though David was going the way of all the earth. **22.** They feasted, and rejoiced, before God. In token of their joy in God and communion with him, they feasted upon their peace offerings before the Lord. What had been offered to God they feasted upon; by which was intimated to them that they should be never the poorer for their late liberal contributions to the service of the temple; they themselves should feast upon the comfort of it. H.—After the sacrifice the portions of the offerings reserved for feasting were distributed for the open air feast and eaten in the presence of the Lord, and the sacred festivities passed into social and domestic enjoyment. For the two full days sacrifices were kept up in sanctuary and outer altar, in uncounted numbers, the people bearing their meats from the sacrifices to their houses, tents and booths, the rulers and princes completing the arrangements for their gifts to the temple. *Knox*.

22. They made Solomon king, the second time. He having been before anointed in haste, upon occasion of Adonijah’s rebellion, it was thought fit to repeat it, for the greater satisfaction of the people. They *anointed him to the Lord*. Magistrates must look upon themselves as set apart for God, to be his ministers, and must rule accordingly in the fear of God. Zadok also was anointed to be priest, in the room of Abiathar, who had lately forfeited this honor. H.

A constant memorial of this solemnity is preserved in that most magnificent of the Psalms of David, the seventy-second, in which the blessings predicted for the reign of Solomon form a transparent veil for the transcendent glories prophesied for Christ’s kingdom, and which is marked as the crowning contribution of its author to the service of the sanctuary by its concluding words, “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended!” P. S.

Section 281.

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID. A PROPHECY OF MESSIAH, THE PERFECT, UNIVERSAL, AND ETERNAL KING.

2 SAMUEL 23 : 1-7.

2 S. 23 : 1 Now these be the last words of David.

David the son of Jesse saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel :

2 The spirit of the LORD spake by me,
And his word was upon my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me :
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,

4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning,
when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds ;
When the tender grass springeth out of the
earth,

Through clear shining after rain.

5 Verily my house is not so with God ;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting
covenant,

Ordered in all things, and sure :
For it is all my salvation, and all *my*
desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow.

6 But the ungodly shall be all of them as
thorns to be thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the
hand :

7 But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of
a spear ;
And they shall be utterly burned with
fire in *their* place.

There are no Psalms which can be pointed to with certainty as embodying the thoughts of David's later years. These "last words of David" seem to stand alone, and have no companion in the Psalter. A. F. K.—This, his last song or psalm, his latest vision, embodied the subject that was most in his mind in the last period of his life. The Psalm recorded in the twenty-second chapter (Sec. 265) was an earlier song, and its main drift was of the past. Of this latest Psalm the main drift is of the future. The colors of this vision are brighter than those of any other. Aged though the seer was, there is a glory in this his latest vision unsurpassed in any that went before. The setting sun spreads a lustre around as he sinks under the horizon unequalled by any he diffused even when he rode in the height of the heavens. W. G. B.

This prophecy is the companion and complement of the prophecy in ch. 7. There the promise of an eternal dominion is given to the house of David, finding a partial fulfilment in his descendants, and a complete fulfilment only in Christ : here David himself is taught by inspiration to draw the portrait of a ruler, some features of which were partially realized in Solomon and the better kings of Judah, but which finds its perfect realization only in Christ. The features of the portrait are developed and the outlines filled in by subsequent prophets, with ever

increasing clearness pointing forward to Him who was to fulfil and more than fulfil all the anticipations of prophecy. A. F. K.—These his "last words" are the Divine attestation of all that he had sung and prophesied in the Psalms concerning the spiritual import of the kingdom which he was to found, in accordance with the Divine message that Nathan had been commissioned to bring to him. Hence these "last words" must be regarded as an inspired prophetic utterance by David, before his death, about *the King* and *the Kingdom* of God in their full and real meaning. A. E.

That which distinguishes David not only from all earthly kings, but even from all the other pious kings of Judah, is the fact that he was not only a sovereign but a prophet. His prophetic character is so much blended with his royalty, that believers may call him a prophet-king, just as Melchisedec is called a priest-king. David "not only *uttered* prophecies, but *did* and *lived* prophecies ; his person and position in history, his whole life and labors, were prophetic." Of all the living types of Christ in the Old Testament, he was one of the most perfect. His adversities foreshadowed the sufferings, his prosperity the triumph, of the spiritual King of Israel. While describing his own experiences, he could not help picturing, though less clearly, the experiences of Christ, who was to be born

of him. The Holy Spirit so guided his pen, that David's individuality was often completely identified with that of his Divine Son ; for his hallowed fancy, breaking through the limits of his own personal experiences, stepped over into those which were to be exclusively peculiar to Christ, and he described these with as great intensity of perception and power of utterance as if he had really experienced them himself. The light of Messianic prophecy, which hitherto had been more or less dim and diffuse, was in him concentrated and made so definite as to be reflected with even increasing lustre through all the revelations of later prophets. *De Liefde.*

The opening words point back to an antique prophecy, the prophecy of Balaam on the fate and glory of Israel. His oracle corresponds with Balaam's, but it also contrasts with it. David's vision is no cloudy and imperfect glimpse of a star and sceptre ; he sees the King, the true King of men, and the new day which the King will make for men. He sees in the future the ideal Ruler, the true Divine King who was to arise on the earth. In sweet, pure figures the kingdom of Christ passed before the mind of David. When the true King came, the darkness in which men sat would be over and gone ; the rain of tears, falling because of the tyranny of man to man, would cease. His hope was based on the "everlasting covenant" which God had made with him. On His word, His promise, His covenant, the dying king bases his hope for his house and for the world. *An.*

The song falls into four parts. First, there is an elaborate introduction, descriptive of the singer and the inspiration which gave birth to his song ; secondly, the main subject of the prophecy, a Ruler among men, of wonderful brightness and glory ; thirdly, a reference to the Psalmist's own house and the covenant God had made with him ; and finally, in the way of contrast to the preceding, a prediction of the doom of the ungodly. W. G. B.

The passage has the distinctive features of Hebrew poetry—the repetitious parallelism and the exuberant imagery. It is also very terse ; consequently elliptical, and sometimes in a measure obscure. To give the greater force to the few special points he has to make, he states in the outset who he is and under what authority he speaks. "The man raised up on high"—taken from following the flock of Jesse and exalted to be the Lord's Anointed over his chosen people. "The sweet Psalmist of Israel"—literally, he who is sweet, delightful as to the songs of Israel ; i.e., whose sacred songs are

charming, mellifluous, precious to the ear and to the soul. In fourfold phrase ; in four diverse forms of expression he affirms that he spake under inspiration of God. "The Spirit spake by me ;" it was *his* word that fell from my tongue ; "the God of Israel said ;" "the Rock of Israel spake to me," thus :—and this is the first and main sentiment of this song : "He that ruleth over men must be *just*, ruling in the fear of God." Inasmuch as he is set to act *for* God and *under* God, let him be true to God's high behest ; let him fairly represent his own Infinite King and Lord. God ordains human government only for the ends of justice and righteousness. Men who rule for other ends and unto other intended results are an utter abomination before him. Verse 4 makes prominent the blessings which attend just and upright ruling. Such a ruler is to his people as the light of morning when the sun rises, even a cloudless morning ; and as the grass which springs up under clear light (sunshine) after rain. Verse 5 is difficult, the choice of constructions lying between the interrogative and the affirmative ; the former thus : For is not my house so with God (i.e., like these figurative representations) ? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all respects and sure (faithfully kept) ; for this is all my salvation and all my desire ; shall it not therefore prosper ? With this construction the sense is unexceptionable. Over against the prosperity of the just and honest ruler, the sons of Belial—wicked, unjust men—shall be as thorns all thrust away ; not to be touched by the hand ; but the man who has occasion to touch them must be armed with iron and wood like the shaft of a spear. Then let them all be burned where they lie, or (as some take the last word)—for their utter end, destruction. Wicked rulers come to an end of unmitigated ruin. Thorns they are, torn out by their roots ; handled with instruments of wood and iron and without mercy ; then fired and burned till they are no more. The fruits of good and just ruling are cheering as the light of the new day ; grateful and welcome as the fresh vegetation of grass and flower under sunshine after rain. Extreme and utter is the contrast under the reign of the sons of Belial. This sentiment is worthy to be the last thought of King David—worthy to be embalmed in the poetic strains of his latest inspired song. H. C.

1. *The sweet psalmist of Israel.* This title seems most eminently to belong to David, as he was the person who had brought to perfection the music of the Jewish service, having not only composed the psalms, but the music also, and

having prescribed to the performers their several parts. *Gray.*

Singing of psalms is a sweet ordinance, very agreeable to those that delight in praising God. It is reckoned among the honors to which David was raised up, that he was a psalmist : in that he was as truly great, as in his being *the anointed of the God of Jacob*. Note, It is true preferment to be serviceable to the church in acts of devotion, and instrumental to promote the blessed work of prayer and praise. Observe, Was David a prince? He was so for Jacob. Was he a psalmist? He was so for Israel. *H.*

2, 3. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was in his tongue;" thus sealing the truth and certainty of his Divine inspiration, and, in consequence of that, the sacred authority of his writings to endless generations. *Delaney.*—Here are three that spake: *The Spirit of the Lord; the God of Israel, and the Rock of Israel*; which some think is an intimation of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the Father, *The God of Israel*, the Son, *the Rock of Israel*, and *the Spirit*, proceeding from the Father and the Son, *who spake by the prophets*, and particularly by David, and whose word was not only in his heart, but in his tongue, for the benefit of others. David here avows his Divine inspiration, that in his psalms and in this composition here, *the Spirit of God spake by him*. He and other holy men spake and wrote *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. This puts an honor upon the Book of Psalms and recommends them to our use in our devotions, that they are words which the Holy Ghost teaches. *H.*

3, 4. The second half of verse 3 draws, with a few strong strokes—there are but six words in the original—an outline portrait of an ideal king, ruling with perfect justice, controlled and guided by the fear of God. Verse 4 depicts in figurative language the blessings of his reign. His appearance will be like the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning; blessings will follow him as verdure clothes the earth from the united influences of sunshine and rain. *A. F. K.*

The second part of the introduction (verses 2, 3) stamps the prophecy with a fourfold mark of inspiration: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me" "His word was in my tongue." "The God of Israel said." "The Rock of Israel spake to me," the faithful One, whose words are stable as a rock, and who provides for Israel a foundation-stone, elect and precious, immovable as the everlasting hills. So remarkable an introduction must be followed by no ordinary prophecy. If the prophecy should bear on nothing more remarkable than some earthly

successor of David, all these sublime preliminary utterances would be singularly out of place. The great subject of the prophecy is a Ruler over men. The Revised Version is at once more literal and more expressive than the Authorized Version.

"One that ruleth over men righteously,
Ruling in the fear of God,
He shall be as the light of the morning."

It is a vision of a remarkable Ruler, not a Ruler over the kingdom of Israel merely, but a Ruler "over men." The Ruler seen is One whose government knows no earthly limits, but prevails wherever there are men. Solomon could not be the ruler seen, for, wide though his empire was, he was king of Israel only, not king of men. Every other human application is out of the question. The "Ruler over men" of this vision must have been identified by David with Him "in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed." It is worthy of very special remark that the first characteristic of this Ruler is "*righteousness*." There is no grander or more majestic word in the language of men. Not even love or mercy can be preferred to righteousness. And this expression is common to the whole class of prophecies that predict the Messiah. "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall rest on Him, and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins." There is no lack in the New Testament of passages to magnify the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus, yet it is made very plain that righteousness was the foundation of all His work. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," were the words with which He removed the objections of John to His baptism, and they were words that described the business of His whole life: to fulfil all righteousness *for* His people and *in* His people—for them, to satisfy the demands of the righteous law and bear the righteous penalty of transgression; in them to infuse His own righteous spirit and mould them into the likeness of His righteous example, to sum up the whole law of righteousness in the law of love, and by His grace instil that law into their hearts. Such essentially was the work of Christ. And Christ's work was constantly done "*in the ear of God*," with the highest possible regard for His will and reverence for His law. "I must be about my Father's business," is his first word, and among the last is, "Not my will, but thine be done." *W. G. B.*

David foresees that in due time the ideal Ruler, the true Divine King, will arise on the earth, who will be of a perfect justice, because he rules in the fear of God. It is the King for whose advent the earth groans and travails ; the King whom men have been trying to find in all their political schemes and revolutions ; a King of a perfect equity, meting out to men of every condition the due reward of their deeds, attuning his justice with mercy because He fears God. It is the King of whom in after ages the prophets prophesied—

“ Behold the days come, saith the Lord,
That I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch ;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And shall execute judgment and justice in the earth ;
And this is the Name by which He shall be called,
Jehovah our Righteousness.”

It is the King of whose advent seers and sages dreamed in hope, believing that men, so miserable under the unjust rulers who consumed them, would be lifted by his coming into ecstasies of joy and praise ; that they would “ rejoice greatly and shout for joy,” because their true King had come to them at last, “ righteous and having salvation.” It is the King who in his lowliness rode into Jerusalem on an ass, welcomed by the hosannahs of little children ; who went meekly to the Cross, and tasted death for every man, that He might redeem us unto life eternal ; who will come again, in the glory of his Father, to repeat in power all that He once wrought in meekness, to establish his kingdom on the earth, and to gather into it the nations. This is the King whom King David saw when death lifted the crown from his weary head,—Christ, the ideal Ruler, the sole, true, and perfect King of men.

As he looked steadfastly into the future, this tender yet august Figure rose before him ; and as he contemplated it he saw—oh, with what thankful wonder and surprise!—a kingdom which surpassed all earthly kingdoms by as much as “ the Just One,” the ideal Ruler, is fairer than the sons of men. One cannot but be touched by the sweet pure figures in which the kingdom of Christ passed before the mind of David. Think what the kings he knew were like—the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Philistia ; what Saul was like ; nay, even what David’s own reign had been like. What tyranny and mutiny, what wars, famines, exactions, revolts had he known in these rulers and their realms ! With what surprise and delight, then, must he have beheld a King whose reign was to be the reign of gentleness and fostering love ; a just King, and yet a King whose influence should be “ as

the light of the morning when the sun rises,” of “ *a morning without clouds,*” of a morning that, coming and “ *shining after rain,*” would bring a fervent gracious heat, beneath which the earth would clothe itself in robes of fresh and “ *tender green*” (verse 4). David had often seen the fields smitten into barrenness by the fierce heat of an Oriental sun ; he had heard the rushing showers of the heavy Eastern rains, and when the morning broke without clouds and the sun shone on the saturated earth, he had seen the barren plains turn green in a day, the tender grass springing up as at the touch of an enchanter’s wand, and the lilies of the field clothing the grass as with the robes of a king and loading the air with fragrance. And it was under this figure that he conceived the Messianic reign. When the true King came, the darkness in which men sat would be over and gone ; the rain of tears, falling forever because of the tyranny of man to man, would cease. The Sun would rise with healing on his wings. A new happy day would be born out of the eternity of God. All that was pure, and lovely, and sweet in human character and life would spring to meet it, and rise into new, fairer, and more fruitful forms. Alas ! that the King should have come, and that the kingdom should even yet be so far off ! Alas ! that David’s hope should still be a hope to us, and little more ! Yet let us cherish this hope. It will be fulfilled. When our hearts are sad and weary, let us patiently look forward to the day yet to dawn, the morning without clouds, whose sun, shining after our tears, will draw forth all the peaceable fruits of righteousness. *Cor.*

As in a clear mirror, the words of David bring before us the King, the blessing, and the final triumph of God’s sovereignty. Yea, verily, this King is ruler in the full force of the word, and the old legend does not thus amaze us, that on His entering the judgment-hall of Pilate the eagles on the Roman banner bowed before Him in humble reverence. Wherever He comes, He reigns over the hearts and minds of His people, through His word and Spirit ; and no sooner has He taken up His abode in any soul, than there arises to it in the heavens the friendly sun. The blessing which He brings is as great as the brightness which the king of day continually sheds forth in this wide circle. No light without heat, no heat without fruitfulness, but light and life, growth and fertility, truth and clearness, courage in life and comfort in death, the rising of this Sun brings from on high to all who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. The darkness may indeed endure for a time, but

the final triumph of God's kingdom is as little doubtful as that of the mid-day sun over the clouds which would obscure his glory. *Van O.*

Indirectly, the passage suggests two essential requirements of human rulers among men. B. — *They must be just, both to those over whom they rule, in allowing them their rights and properties; and between those over whom they rule, using their power to right the injured against the injurious. It is not enough that they do no wrong, but they must not suffer wrong to be done. They must rule in the fear of God; that is, they must themselves be possessed with a fear of God, by which they will be effectually restrained from all acts of injustice and oppression: Nehemiah was so (ch. 5 : 15), So did not I, because of the fear of God; and Joseph (Gen. 42 : 18). They must also endeavor to promote the fear of God—that is, the practice of religion, among those over whom they rule. The magistrate is to be the keeper of both tables, and to protect both godliness and honesty. H.*

5. For is not my house thus with God? for an eternal covenant hath he made for me, ordered in all and secured: for all my salvation and all good pleasure shall he not cause it to spring forth? This seems the most probable rendering of an obscure passage. The meaning then will be: Is not my house in such relation to God, because He has made an eternal covenant with me, that I may look for the righteous ruler to arise out of it, bringing with him all these attendant blessings? "The eternal covenant" is the promise in ch. 7 : 12 ff, to which David refers as the ground of his confidence in the fulfilment of this prophecy in and through his house. The epithets "ordered in all and secured" compare the covenant to a carefully drawn and properly attested legal document. Finally he expresses his confidence that God will in due time cause the salvation promised to him and his house, and all His own good pleasure, to grow and prosper. A. F. K.

The key to the passage will be found in the expression "*my house.*" When David speaks of his house, he means his dynasty. In this sense his "house" had been made the subject of the most gracious promise. "Moreover, the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee. . . . Then David said, . . . What is my house, that Thou hast brought me thus far? . . . Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come." The king felt profoundly on that occasion that his house was even more

prominently the subject of Divine promise than himself. What roused his gratitude to its utmost height was the gracious provision for his house. Surely the covenant referred to in the passage now before us, "ordered in all things and sure," was this very covenant announced to him by the prophet Nathan, the covenant that made this provision for his house. It is impossible to think of him recalling this covenant and yet saying, "Verily my house is not so with God" (Revised Version). But take the marginal reading—"Is not my house so with God?" Is not my dynasty embraced in the scope of this promise? Hath He not made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure? And will He not make this promise, which is all my salvation and all my desire, to grow, to fructify? It is infinitely more natural to represent David on this joyous occasion congratulating himself on the promise of long continuance and prosperity made to his dynasty, than dwelling on the unhappy condition of the members of his family circle. And the facts of the future correspond to this explanation. Was not the government of David's house or dynasty in the main righteous, at least for many a reign, conducted in the fear of God, and followed by great prosperity and blessing? David himself, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah—what other nation had ever so many Christlike kings? What a contrast was presented to this in the main by the apostate kingdom of the ten tribes, idolatrous, God-dishonoring, throughout! And as to the growth or continued vitality of his house, its "clear shining after rain," had not God promised that He would bless it, and that it would continue forever before Him? He knew that, spiritually dormant at times, his house would survive, till a living root came from the stem of Jesse, till the Prince of life should be born from it, and once that plant of renown was raised up, there was no fear but the house would be preserved forever. From this point it would start on a new career of glory; nay, this was the very Ruler of whom he had been prophesying, at once David's Son and David's Lord; this was the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. Conducted to this stage in the future experience of his house, he needed no further assurance, he cherished no further desire. The covenant that rested on Him and that promised Him was ordered in all things and sure. The glorious prospect exhausted his every wish. "This is all my salvation and all my desire." W. G. B.

He hath made with me an everlasting covenant. Whatever trouble a child of God may have the

prospect of, still he has some comfort or other to balance it with, and none like this. It may be understood of the covenant of royalty (in the type), which God made with David and his seed, touching the kingdom (Ps. 132 : 11, 12). But it must look further, to the covenant of grace made with all believers, that God will be, in Christ, to them a God, which was signified by the covenant of royalty, and therefore the promises of the covenant are called *the sure mercies of David* (Is. 55 : 3). It is this only that is the everlasting covenant, and it cannot be imagined that David, who, in so many of his psalms, speaks so clearly concerning Christ, and the grace of the Gospel, should forget it in his last words. God has made a covenant of grace with us in Jesus Christ, and we are here told, *First*, That it is an *everlasting* covenant, from everlasting, in the contrivance and counsel of it, and to everlasting, in the continuance and consequences of it. *Secondly*, That it is *ordered*, well ordered in all things, admirably well, to advance the glory of God, and the honor of the Mediator, together with the highest well-being of the trusting believer. H.

David could rely on his covenant because it was "equipped with all things," because it provided for all events, even for "the falling away" of his seed : because God had assured him that, even if his seed should commit iniquity, though He would chasten them, He would not take away his mercy from them. The covenant was "*attested*," made sure, by this gracious provision ; for if even the faithlessness of men could not annul the covenant, what could annul it ? God would never be faithless ; and therefore David was certain that God would cause "all the salvation" promised to his children to spring forth, that all the "good pleasure" of the Lord, as expressed in the covenant, would be accomplished. Is not *our* covenant, then, an everlasting covenant ? Has not God pledged Himself that the world shall be redeemed, that all flesh shall see his salvation ? Has He not assured us that the unfaithfulness of men shall not make his redeeming purpose of none effect ? that if the seed of Christ commit iniquity, though He will chasten them for their sins, He will never remove his mercy from them ? We too, then, have a covenant on which we may rely. It is equipped at all points, makes provision for all events. If our unfaithfulness cannot annul it, nothing can annul it ; for God is faithful who hath promised : He cannot change nor lie. It is on God's redeeming purpose and intention, on his eternal will for the salvation of all who can and will be saved, that we must stay our

hearts when they are weak and sad. We cannot build our hopes on ourselves, on our fidelity, our loyalty, for we veer and change before every breath ; nor on our neighbors, for they are variable as we. But God sits on high, above all reach of change, carrying out the steadfast purpose of his love through the very vicissitudes which obscure Him from our sight and set us doubting whether for ourselves or others. Let us trust in Him. Let us rest in the love from which "neither death, nor even life," neither time, nor even change can in anywise separate us. Cox.

6, 7. The last part of the prophecy, in the way of contrast to the leading vision, is a prediction of the doom of the ungodly. The revised translation is much the clearer :

"But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand,
But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff and spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place."

While some would fain think of Christ's sceptre as one of mercy only, the uniform representation of the Bible is different. In this, as in most predictions of Christ's kingly office, there is an instructive combination of mercy and judgment. In the bosom of one of Isaiah's sweetest predictions, he introduces the Messiah as anointed by the Spirit of God to proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God." In a subsequent vision, Messiah appears marching triumphantly "with dyed garments from Bozrah, after treading the people in His anger and trampling them in His fury." Malachi proclaimed Him "the Sun of righteousness, with healing under His wings," while His day was to burn as an oven and consume the proud and the wicked like stubble. Expressions equally clear and strong are found in his own utterances, and in the Apocalypse. Nor could it be otherwise. The union of mercy and judgment is the inevitable result of the righteousness which is the foundation of His government. Sin is the abominable thing which He hates. To separate men from sin is the grand purpose of His government. For this end, He draws His people into union with Himself, thereby forever removing their guilt, and providing for the ultimate removal of all sin from their hearts and the complete assimilation of their natures to His holy nature. Blessed are they who enter into this relation ; but alas for those who, for all that He has done, prefer their sins to Him ! "The ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away." W. G. B.

These, then, are the scenes which passed be-

fore David, as at the last his eyes grow large and clear with the inspiration of the Almighty ; these the scenes which pass before us as we listen to the " oracle " of the son of Jesse. First of all, there rose before him an image of the perfect Man, the ideal Ruler, with no iron sceptre in his hand, ruling over men not by force, but by justice, not for his own aggrandizement, but for their good ; blending mercy with justice because He is animated by the fear of God. As the lines of that august yet gracious Form grow dim, there rises before him a vision of the earth drenched with fertilizing showers, rejoicing in the clear shining of a morning without clouds, and greeting the benignant rays with springing verdure and fragrant incense. Then, he remembers the day when he first sat in peace on the throne of Israel, resolving in his grateful heart that he would build a house for the God who had " highly exalted " him. What a humbling and bewildering pain it was to him to learn that this honor was denied him ! that the blood on his hands, though its stains had been contracted in the service of God, unfitted him to build a temple for Jehovah ! And God, how tenderly He had turned sorrow into joy by choosing *that* moment to assure him that his own house should never fail, that the true King of men should be a branch from his stem, that the renovated earth and new heavenly day should be possessed by his seed ! And, last of all, there rises up before him a field overrun with thorns, which the Divine ministers pluck up with gauntleted hands, and beat down with their burnished spears, and commit to the consuming flames.

What a grand vision it is ! How wide its scope ! How much it suggests ! What a magnificent consummation of David's magnificent career ! What a Divine close to that most human life ! The psalmist rises into the seer, the king into the father of the King of kings ; and David passes from us radiant with an excellent and surpassing glory, at his highest moment, in his loftiest mood, the heavenly and eternal splendor dawning on him as his eyes close on the vanities of earth. *Cox.*

One psalm there is attributed to David, which is, at any rate, the work of an old man—a sweet song into which mellow wisdom has condensed its final lessons—and a snatch of it may stand instead of any summing-up of the life by us :

" Trust in the Lord, and do good ;
Dwell in the land, and enjoy security ;
Delight thyself also in the Lord,

And He shall give thee the desires of thy heart.
Commit thy way unto the Lord.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

I have been young and now am old,
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.

I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green tree. . .
Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not."

May we not apply the next words to the psalmist himself, and hear him calling us to look on him as he lies on his dying bed—disturbed though it were by ignoble intrigues of hungry heirs—after so many storms nearing the port ; after so many vicissitudes, close to the unchanging home ; after so many struggles, resting quietly on the breast of God : " Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Into this opal calmness, as of the liquid light of sunset, all the flaming splendors of the hot day have melted. The music of his songs die away into " peace ; " as when some master holds our ears captive with tones so faint that we scarce can tell sound from silence, until the jar of common noises, which that low sweetness had deadened, rushes in.

One strain of a higher mood is preserved for us in the historical books ; that prophecy of the true King, whom his own failures and sins, no less than his consecration and victories, had taught him to expect. The dying eyes see on the horizon of the far-off future the form of Him who is to be a just and perfect ruler ; before the brightness of whose presence, and the refreshing of whose influence, verdure and beauty shall clothe the world. As the shades gather, that radiant glory to come brightens. He departs in peace, having seen the salvation from afar. It was fitting that this fullest of his prophecies should be the last of his strains, as if the rapture which thrilled the trembling strings had snapped them in twain. And then, for earth, the richest voice which God ever tuned for his praise was hushed, and the harp of Jesse's son hangs untouched above his grave. But for him death was God's last, best answer to his prayer, " O Lord, open Thou my lips ; " and as that cold but most loving hand unclothes him from the weakness of flesh, and leads him in among the choirs of heaven, we can almost hear again his former thanksgiving breaking from his immortal lips, " Thou hast put a new song into my mouth," whose melodies, unsaddened by plaintive minors of penitence and pain, are yet nobler and sweeter than the psalms which he sang here, and left to be the solace and treasure of all generations ! A. M.

Section 282.

DEATH OF DAVID. ELEMENTS AND EFFECTS OF HIS CHARACTER AND LIFE-WORK.

1 KINGS 2 : 10, 11. 1 CHRONICLES 29 : 26-30.

1 K. 2 : 10 AND David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

1 Chron. 29 : 26, 27 Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years : seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and
 28 three *years* reigned he in Jerusalem. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and
 29 honor : and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. Now the acts of David the king, first and
 last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, and in the history of Nathan
 30 the prophet, and in the history of Gad the seer ; with all his reign and his might, and the
 times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

David now passed away. After seventy years of intensely active life, "he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor." Born in a rude age, when the tribes of Israel had in a measure degenerated toward the old Egyptian barbarism, God had gifted him with a fine spiritual fibre, and by the severe processes of Providence, even to the passing through the fires of a long-anguished conscience, had strengthened and refined his soul. By this training it was that the Spirit of God enabled him to achieve a work so vast, so permanent and grand in its effects, such as none has ever done, before or since. Not in his conquests only, though these well-nigh covered the breadth of the promise to Abraham, "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates ;" nor in his systematic organization and ordering of the nation's internal affairs, though this helped to give it strength, stability, and pre-eminence among the nations of the world. But the grand achievement of David was wrought upon the souls of the people through the moral and spiritual forces bestowed upon him, and Divinely nurtured and guided. By this Divine indwelling and inworking, partly as the result of the double discipline of adversity and sore transgression, David impressively commended the law and illustrated the truth and grace of Jehovah. In his life he effectually preached righteousness and exemplified faith and obedience toward God. In his broken strains and triumphant songs he magnified the Fatherhood and the compassionate, forgiving love of Jehovah ; and, like Abraham, rejoicingly looked forward to Messiah's day, nay more, beheld the coming Christ in the line of royal succession, and "in spirit called him Lord." Thus, through the distinguishing grace of God vouchsafed to him in these respects

above all other men, David left upon the mind and heart of the Jewish people an indelible impress, which was deepened by the transfer to the Messiah, as His peculiar title, of the name, THE SON OF DAVID. Let us bear these facts in mind, as we advance to study the outwardly brilliant and seemingly successful career of Solomon—a career whose bright promise was shaded at the last to sadness and gloom, and whose early successes and later indulgences terminated at length almost in wreck of life and hope. No Bible history carries with it so much and such needed practical teaching for youth, and middle life, and old age. None exhibits so plainly and forcibly the great moral of right living. None treats so fully the uses and the misuses or wastes of life. And none meets and answers so accurately every problem, question, and longing pertaining to the every-day experience of all. B.

In the varied elements of his life and character there is no one in the whole of the Bible like David. A life teeming with vicissitudes, with romance, with pathos, and those startling changes of fortune which make history so much stranger than fiction. What drama is equal to it for tragic and romantic interest alone, to say nothing of instruction? His character is as varied as his life. It reminds to no small extent of him whose writings in the New Testament hold somewhat the same place as the Psalms in the Old, the Apostle John. In both there is all the strength of man with all the tenderness of woman. In both there is the same intensity—intensity of action, intensity of thought and word, intensity of love and hate. With the exception of his dastardly conduct to Uriah there is no meanness about him. There is nobility even in his faults ; and certainly his repentance is noble. Is there any one in the whole of the

Old Testament of whom we know so much, and yet find so much to admire, and praise, and love? With his chivalry and generosity, with his passionate love for his friend and for his son, with his sweetness and delicacy, his energy and courage, do we not feel him to be a man after *man's* own heart as well as after God's? Whether we take the world's rough measure and judge him by what he *did*, or look deeper and judge him by what he *was*, we must admit that in him we have a king who was at once a true hero and a true saint. Whether we regard the influence of David himself upon the people he ruled, or the growth and development of the people under his guidance, or the instruction which his life supplies for each individual soul, or the deep analogies which lie between the history of Israel at this its most glorious period and the history of the Christian Church, the age and reign of David stand alone in Israel's history. *Plummer.*

DEATH AND BURIAL OF DAVID.

1 K. 2 : 10. Now, when he has finished his great work in the organization and establishment of the kingdom, and when he has closed all with a zealous blessing of his Solomon and his people, David sleeps with his fathers. O blessed soul, how quiet a possession hast thou now taken, after so many tumults, of a better crown! Thou, that hast prepared all things for the house of thy God, how happily art thou now welcomed to that house of his, "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!" *Bp. II.*

He was buried in the city of David; not in the burying-place of his father, as Saul was, but in his own city, which he was the founder of. There were set the thrones and there the tombs, of the house of David. His epitaph may be taken from 2 S. 23 : 1. Here lies David the son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel; adding his own words (Ps. 16 : 9), My flesh also shall rest in hope. H. — After the return from the Captivity, "the sepulchres of David" were still pointed out between Siloah and "the house of the mighty men," or "the guard-house" (Neh. 3 : 16). "His sepulchre is with us unto this day," said Peter at Pentecost. P. S.

1 Chron. 29 : 29, 30. For a fuller account of David's life and reign, the reader is referred to the histories or records of those times, which were written by Samuel while he lived, and continued, after his death, by Nathan and Gad (verse 29). *There was related what was observable in his government at home, and his wars*

*abroad, the times—that is, the events of the times, that went over him (verses 29, 30). These registers were then in being, but are now lost. Good use may be made of those histories of the church, which are authentic, though not sacred, or of Divine inspiration. H. — The canon of Scripture seems at or after the close of David's reign to be added to by the prophets Nathan and Gad. It appears probable by the Scriptures that they carried on the history of the two Books of Samuel from the place where Samuel left it, and finished it. These two Books of Samuel seem to be the book that is here called the *Book of Samuel the seer, and Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer. Edwards.**

Having provided for the security of the succession, the maintenance of the law, and the lasting dignity of the national religion, David breathed his last, having reigned forty years over the flourishing and powerful monarchy of which he may be considered the founder. He had succeeded to a kingdom distracted with civil dissension, environed on every side by powerful and victorious enemies, without a capital, almost without an army, without any bond of union between the tribes. He left a compact and united State, stretching from the frontier of Egypt to the foot of Lebanon, from the Euphrates to the sea. He had crushed the power of the Philistines, subdued or curbed all the adjacent kingdoms: he had formed a lasting and important alliance with the great city of Tyre. He had organized an immense disposable force: every month twenty-four thousand men, furnished in rotation by the tribes, appeared in arms, and were trained as the standing militia of the country. At the head of his army were officers of consummate experience, and, what was more highly esteemed in the warfare of the time, extraordinary personal activity, strength, and valor. His heroes remind us of those of Arthur or Charlemagne, excepting that the armor of the feudal chieftains constituted the superiority; here main strength of body and dauntless fortitude of mind. The Hebrew nation owed the long peace of the son's reign to the bravery and wisdom of the father. If the rapidity with which a kingdom rises to unexampled prosperity, and the permanence, as far as human wisdom can provide, of that prosperity, be a fair criterion of the abilities and character of a sovereign, few kings in history can compete with David. His one great crime violated the immutable and universal laws of morality, and therefore admits of no excuse. On the other hand, his consummate personal bravery and military talent—his generosity to his enemies—

his fidelity to his friends—his knowledge of, and steadfast attention to, the true interests of his country—his exalted piety and gratitude toward his God, justify the zealous and fervent attachment of the Jewish people to the memory of their great monarch. *Milman.*

At David's death, the people were victorious, their kingdom enlarged, dreaded by all their neighbors, the ablest men conduct the wisely-organized administration, and a genuine son of the illustrious father is upon the firmly-established throne. The ark and places of sacrifice now await their immediate union in a gorgeous temple already decided upon, the Divine service is organized, and heart and spirit stirring prophets and priests reveal God's will, and watch over the doctrine and the instruction of the people; and Israel possesses the legacy of the very noble songs of a talented king, which not only celebrate the joys of the altar and house of the Lord, the favor of Jehovah to his people, but for men of spiritual discernment the hope of Him who should come, whose throne endures forever and ever, whom God, his own God, has anointed with the oil of gladness. Yea, the genuine Israelite might, with adoration, and the most joyful hope, say, at the grave of this king, "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144 : 15). C. G. B.

Mutual Relations of the Hebrews to other known Historic Nations.

Before we take our leave of David, let our attention be turned a moment to the connection of the Hebrew people with other nations known to history. With their Exodus from Egypt, the Hebrews severed themselves for a long time from all historic connection with Egypt. Amalek, Midian, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Amorites of great Arabia; the Canaanites, Hittites, and Philistines of Palestine; have none of them sent down to our time any historic records of date anterior to Solomon? Whatever records (if any) they may have had have long since perished. Egypt, during most or all of this period—from the Exodus to Solomon—was comparatively inactive; Assyria was yet undeveloped. That the Hebrew people came into no collision of arms with either Egypt or Egypt's old enemies of Western Asia, peopling the valleys of the Orontes and the Euphrates, may perhaps be due to the fact that they did not hold the coast line of the Mediterranean—the well-known thoroughfare of armies, Egyptian or Asiatic—in their hostile demonstrations. May it not have been of God's wise providence to leave this coast line through

so many centuries in the hands of the Philistines, and thus exempt the Hebrews from all contact with the movements of hostile armies threading that great route of travel from Egypt to Western Asia? Remembering how it befell King Josiah (2 Chron. 35 : 20-24) when he came into collision with Pharaoh Necho, hurling his chariots and horsemen upon the rising empire of Chaldea, we may readily apprehend the possibilities of this danger. Until the reign of David they did not practically occupy that coast line—the western margin belt of Palestine. Thus it came to pass that during the entire period from Moses to David, including the administrations of Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, and Saul, all the foreign powers with whom the Hebrews came into contact have passed into oblivion, leaving no historic records behind them.

With David a new era in this respect opened. When he pushed his victorious armies into the valley of the Euphrates and smote the king of Zobah (2 S. 8 : 3-8) and also the Syrians of Damascus who were called in to their help, he came politically into contact with nations of whose history some fragments have survived to our times. *Are those fragments in harmony with the history which appears in our sacred books?* This war is mentioned by Eupolemus in a fragment preserved to us by Eusebius, thus: "David discomfited the Syrians who dwelt by the river Euphrates, and subdued Commagene, and the Assyrians and Phœnicians of Gadalene. He also made expeditions against the Idumeans, and Ammonites, and Moabites, and Itureans, and Nabateans, and Nabdeans." Nicolas of Damascus (of the age of Augustus Cæsar) is believed to have drawn his information from the records or traditions of his own country. He wrote: "After this there was a certain Hadad, a native Syrian, who had great power. He ruled over Damascus and all Syria except Phœnicia. He likewise undertook a war with David, the king of Judea, and contended with him in many battles. In the last of them all, which was by the river Euphrates, and in which he suffered defeat, he yet showed himself a prince of the greatest courage and prowess." That Nicolas speaks of David as "king of Judea" is due to the date of his writing (within the century before the Christian era) when that country was known under no other name. That he eulogizes Hadad, though recording his signal defeat before David, may be ascribed to merit or to national feeling. The salient points in this fragment indicate its authenticity.

According to the sacred narrative, David came into special relations with Tyre and her King

Hiram. (See 2 S. 5 : 11, and 1 K. 5 : 1, and 1 Chron. 14 : 1.) These points are made historically probable by the following considerations : That Tyre, Sidon, and Phœnicia, in general, led the civilized world in the line of commerce and architecture ; that after David obtained control of the great commercial thoroughfare from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, it became vital to their commerce to be on friendly terms with him ; that the natural trade with David's country was of priceless value to those cities—they giving cedars and skilled mechanical labor, and getting bread-stuffs in exchange. Hence, most naturally, "Hiram became ever a lover of David" (1 K. 5 : 1). Direct confirmation of the sacred history appears in the fact that the name of Hiram as the king of Tyre at this period comes to us certified upon an Assyrian inscription ; also in the testimony of Menander preserved by Josephus, of Herodotus, and also of Dios. Dios and Menander were Phœnician historians. Special confirmation appears also in the nicely accurate references in Scripture to Sidon and to Tyre—the former in most ancient times the leading city ; but the latter taking the lead in the time of David and ever after. Testimonies from the oldest profane records are remarkably in accord with this change in the relative importance of these cities. While Sidon occurs in Scripture even before Abraham (Gen. 10 : 15, 19) ; in the benedictions of Jacob (Gen. 49 : 13) ; and as "great Zidon" (Josh. 11 : 8 and 19 : 28), Tyre comes first to view (Josh. 19 : 29). So, in profane authorities, Homer speaks of Sidon often ; but of Tyre never. Thus our scriptural history of David receives all the confirmation from profane sources which the present state of those records allows us to expect. As we come down to later periods and as profane records multiply, the points of confirmation will be correspondingly more numerous. H. C.

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF DAVID.

Every man's life, it has been remarked, is a plan of God ; in the obscurest history there is some Divine purpose ; what God said of Cyrus, He may say of the most commonplace man that ever passed unnoticed through life—"I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." But in the case of such a life as that of David, God's plan, from its conspicuous and commanding grandeur, is fitted to arrest the attention of all. Exalted though he was in station, the lessons of his life are in the main applicable to all. W. G. B.—Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Paul stand out in lonely and individual

grandeur amid the story of their time. The histories of those men are pictures, on a grand scale, of the common sorrows and battles of the human soul. The whole tendency of God's record is to bring them near to us. It never omits their weaknesses and failures ; it never depicts them as powerful saints, but as men subject to the temptations and liable to the passions that beset ourselves ; and could we realize this brotherhood, we should gain from them new light on life's story ; new power for its battles ; new life amid the defects and failures of this perplexed and careless world. *E. L. Hul.*

The history of his time is crowded with characters. But the great lessons come to us from David himself, around whom, as a centre, all these characters revolved,—David, one of the rarest men in history, prophet, poet, warrior, ruler, saint and sinner, a man of sorrows, and yet a man of the brightest qualities, and of the most devout joy in God. D. F.—His life begins amid the peaceful scenes of a shepherd's life. The calmness of its morning time is suddenly broken by the din of arms, though there is heard amid the pauses of battle the sweet strains of a poet's harp. Men and women are seen uniting in their homage to the harper-hero, the young lion-heart of the nation. From the obscurity of a wilderness, the shepherd stepped at once into the full blaze of public life, as the champion of his people. But his heart was not uplifted, nor his sound sense impaired, by a change as sudden as it was great. When the throne was at length reached, and the kingdom consolidated, luxury and ease began to undermine a heart that had withstood danger in the field, danger in the house, and danger in the wilderness. But underneath the baser part of his nature lay a greatness of soul that earned for him the honor of being called "the servant of God." When the evil that was in him mastered the good, its outbreaks seemed shocking at the time, and are counted equally shocking in our day. But these surprises were not habitual. They did not occur so often from month to month, and from year to year, that all around the king looked for them as ordinary unfoldings of his life. They were falls from a loftier to a lower state, bitterly regretted and speedily turned from with loathing. Such is the view of David's character given by the sacred writer. While knowing much better than we do what was truly good in the king, he does not hide from us what was really bad. In our eyes, the evil that was wrought by David bulks more largely than the good ; because, living in an age of high professions, we see it in its naked vile-

ness : in the inspired writer's view, the good that David did held its rightful place, because he knew fully, what we only know in part, the worth which adorned that prince's life. The evil that David did lives after him, never losing aught of blackness as time rolls on, and the obligations of conscience are more recognized. But the good he did, and the worthy name he enjoyed, may shine with a feebler light, as we travel farther from his days of comparative darkness into those of clearer light and loftier morals. Knowing this, we are bound to take the character of the Hebrew king, drawn by the sacred writer, as a true picture of what the man really was. That David was a brave soldier, and as good as he was brave, is proved both by the testimony of those who knew him, and by his actions. To bravery and goodness of heart combined was due the restraint he put on himself and his men, when Saul, an unwearied seeker after his life, fell into his power, not once but twice. No generous mind can read the story of David's twofold forbearance without feeling how brave and great-hearted he must have been who could thrust aside the wish for vengeance, or chide others for giving it room in their thoughts.

Or can any one read the lament over Saul and Jonathan, and not recognize in the words the overflowing of a true mourner's heart? Or could greater bravery have been shown than David showed in forbidding Abishai to take the life of the wretched Shimei, who was insulting a king and his captains when they were driven to bay? If we judge the king by the modern standard of Western civilization, we shall find much to admire in the scanty records of his life. But if we take for a standard the morality found in the courts of Eastern despots, whether in ancient or in modern times, we shall see in David a brightness of moral worth which marks him out as one of the noblest of our race. Perhaps the best proof of David's worth, apart from the direct statements of history, is the regard in which he was held by those who came much in contact with him. To have knit together the band of six hundred men amid danger and trouble, implies a power to command respect and even affection by no means common among men. To have retained their unswerving allegiance for years, notwithstanding many inducements to betray him to his enemies, is a more singular testimony to this controlling power over their rude natures. Treason did not exist in their ranks. Men, whose flocks and property he protected, were not only ungrateful for his kindness, but repaid his care with insult and treachery. None of the six hundred were traitors.

They were devoted friends, held by an attachment that may well be called romantic. *Sime.*

David is, next to Moses, the most heroic figure of the Old Testament. In the case of Moses, however, the legislative activity overshadows the biographical description. The personal incidents of his long life are few and scattered. The biography of David, on the other hand, is minute, and its threads are everywhere interwoven with his public activity. Even his recreation has had a world wide meaning. The harp was his solace in the solitude of his early life ; and by that harp he has conquered more hearts than by his sword. We have a better knowledge of him than we have of any other man who lived three thousand years ago. The account not only covers the entire Second Book of Samuel, but the latter and larger half of the First Book, and the whole of the First Book of the Chronicles, to say nothing of the lost histories written by the prophets Nathan and Gad. To this should be added the charming Book of Ruth. The combined accounts contain not far from sixty thousand words. Nearly one-half of the compact history, describing the fortunes of the Jewish monarchy from the election of Saul to the captivity of Babylon, a period of over five hundred years, is devoted to the checkered life and work of this one man. This simple statement discloses a marvelous literary activity by known and unknown writers ; for while the authorship of the historical books is unknown, there can be no question that they are based upon a critical sifting of contemporaneous accounts, and a careful examination of State papers. It brings to light also a most impartial and elevated historical judgment ; for the earliest estimate of David has been confirmed by all subsequent criticism. With all his faults and grievous sins, he was the greatest and the best of all the kings of Israel, a man of large and generous mould, rightly named the Beloved, the man after God's own heart. His preparation for the monarchy from the day when Samuel anointed him at Bethlehem, until the death of Saul made him the ruler of Judah, is the first chapter in his recorded life. Here he appears at his best, in the freshness of his youth, the fearless bravery of his spirit, the modesty of his behavior, the magnanimity and self-restraint developed during his long and hard exile, the unstained loyalty of his conduct. Again and again is it said that David behaved himself wisely. He was every inch a warrior. The people met him with shouts that filled Saul's heart with envy, an envy that grew at last into settled hatred. Was ever faithful servant treated as was this young man by his king, driven from

the palace to Samuel's retreat, and thence to the enemy's country, only to be driven again into the wilderness, to live as an outlaw, with a price upon his head? Twice was Saul in his power, but he would not harm a hair of his head. The king of Philistia hoped to win him as an ally, but he never smote an Israelite. Through all these years he knew that the prophetic authority of Samuel had declared him to be the divinely chosen successor of Saul; but he raised no standard of revolt. He waited for the providence of God, and for the voice of the people. In all this he was a true disciple of Samuel. And when at last Saul's life went out in tragedy, the lying reporter, who claimed to have been the hero of the hour, was summarily and severely punished, while David broke out in words of lamentation that have become proverbial: "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places! How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon! Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you! Ye daughters of Israel weep! How are the mighty fallen!" Noble and patriotic words from the lips of as noble a soldier and patriot as ever lived. And now, as we follow him into a larger arena, for twenty years we have little reason to blush for him. The tragedy of his life comes in the middle of his reign. He had waited long and patiently for the crown. Judah promptly recognized his authority, and he was anointed at Hebron. One of his first public acts was to thank the men of Jabesh-Gilead, whom Saul had delivered from their Ammonite oppressors, for their bravery and kindness in rescuing the bodies of the fallen king and his sons and giving them decent burial. The war between his own house and the house of Saul was purely defensive on David's part. He permitted no reprisals and frowned upon all treachery. The State was divided for seven years and a half, when the ripe prize fell into David's hands without a blow on his part and by the request of all the tribes. At last all opposition disappeared, not by smiting of the sword, not by the Oriental policy of dagger and poison, but by patient waiting and magnanimous forbearance. The character of David brought the tribes to his feet; and at their request he was for the third and last time anointed king. He was now thirty-seven years old; and the vigor with which he entered upon his aggressive and organizing work shows that he had laid his plans long before. His retirement had not been spent in idleness. He saw that the new State needed a capital, centrally located and easily defended. He pitched upon Jerusa-

lem, then a Jebusite fortress, which the occupants regarded as impregnable. Its capture was a masterly stroke, and was succeeded by the removal of the ark to the new capital, making the city the political and the religious headquarters of the nation. Then he gave his attention to the enemies of Israel. He never seems to have provoked a war, but when he entered upon a campaign he pushed his advantage to the utmost. There is but one shadow upon this period of twenty years—the polygamy which was introduced as a feature of the royal household after the public coronation at Hebron. And now, after thirteen years of undisputed sovereignty, with the last great war drawing to an end, there comes a startling lapse, and the next twenty years are keyed to a moan. David's double sin was followed by a succession of awful domestic tragedies, by the rebellion and death of Absalom, and by the revolt of Sheba. These things indicate breaking energy. He was growing old by the pressure of his grief, and the Fifty-first Psalm shows us that his spirit was more bowed down than his body. The man's magnanimous tenderness holds out to the last. He is crushed with grief over Absalom's death. He liberally commends and rewards Barzillai. He restores Amasa to a command in the army. He refuses to retaliate upon Shimei, who greeted him with curses upon his flight. He feels that he has more than deserved it all; and so he shows us in his second exile the same noble qualities that marked his early outlaw life. *Behrends.*

David's *character* throughout his history is remarkably *transparent*. The attentive reader sees the real David everywhere in his full and distinct proportions. Nobody can doubt his sincerity, his great simplicity of character, his affectionate disposition, his proclivity toward strong and ardent friendships, his magnanimity as we see it continually evinced toward Saul, and, indeed, toward Absalom—his two sorest enemies. That he had personal courage, who can fail to see? So also he had rare power as a leader of men, whether in war or in peace—a large measure of that cool, independent, self-reliant judgment, which made his intuitions so safe, and his success so nearly universal. This class of qualities alone would suffice to place him among the world's greatest men. In respect to gifts of mind in the special sense he was thoroughly a musician and a poet. Through native endowment he took in readily these great arts—poetry and song. By means of these gifts, and their early and never neglected culture, he was prepared of God to inaugurate that wonderful institution of sacred song in Israel which

ministered so richly during his reign to the attractions and to the moral power of the sanctuary worship, and which has sent down through all future ages its legacy of blessings. But the best thing to be said of David is that from early age to his death, he was a servant, a worshipper, and a friend of God. There have been other men of equal native endowments who yet have failed to fill any worthy sphere of service for God or for man, through lack of this steadfast relationship to God. David was a great success in life, because he lived and walked with God. The one great sin of his life was a mournful exception to the otherwise pure and steadfast current of his history. Yet while this great sin and the manifold evils in his family are before our mind, let it be said, not by any means as an apology morally, but somewhat as an explanation philosophically—that it was David's misfortune to live in an age of polygamy, and, moreover, an age when current sentiment and usage made polygamy specially incumbent upon kings, and accorded them a certain license for violation of their marriage vows. David was human, and not above the influence of these pernicious sentiments and usages of his time. To these as occasions and temptations we trace his great sin, and more than a few of the saddest calamities and sorrows of his life. Passing these sins, everything else testifies that he walked with God. If we read his Psalms in connection with the leading events of his historic life, we see the evidence that his prayer and communion with God kept the Holy One of Israel ever before him; that he sought and found help under all the changes and extremest exigencies of a most eventful life; that during those years of perpetual trial from Saul, his soul was evermore steadied and stayed on the Lord his God; that under the glory of a prosperous throne he did not become giddy and vain, but bore his honors meekly and sought to acquit himself rather to God than to men. It is wonderful how such fear and love of God give to the great men of earth the ballast they so much need. How safely they outride the storms of life with God at the helm! A sense of his presence impresses just views of responsibility, brings conscious help in every need, and precious consolation, though every other source thereof should fail. We may, therefore, think of David as setting before all men holding positions of responsibility an illustrious example of the priceless value of true piety, showing how it comes in to *make* a noble character and to insure the best success in human endeavor; how it shields from peril and guides in wisdom; how

it ministers consolation where every human heart needs it, and glorifies man by keeping him evermore beneath the shadow of the Almighty. H. C.

There was in David a rare combination of all that was gentle, tender, and mild—with the most exalted enthusiasm, the most noble aspirations, the most generous sentiments, the most manly deportment, the most heroic daring, and the most invincible prowess. Joined to this was an invariable consideration for others, an open-heartedness, a humbleness, and an entire absence of all pretension.

To these personal qualities, David added all the accomplishments of his age and country. His age was not one of scholarship or books. Yet such scholarship as was valued among his countrymen, he possessed—and the books that were found among them, he well knew. Above all, he had deeply studied such parts of the sacred Scripture as then existed. His writings continually evince his close acquaintance with it—his admiration of it—his intense appreciation of its value—his love for it. This shows that he had attained the same state of grace, had been subject to the same teachings of the Divine Spirit, by which all true—that is, all vital, spiritual knowledge must be imparted—as we are bound to realize under a more perfect system, and with more ample materials, and broader revelations. There has been but one Spirit from the beginning; and David was taught of Him. We know this because he *loved* God's law and rejoiced in it. It is easy to know that law, as it existed in his time and as it exists in ours, externally, as a body of words—easy to admire it and value it. But for *love* to it, the Spirit's teachings were necessary; and David loved the law of God with an ardency of affection which puts to shame the cooler appreciation, often seen among us, of the more ample and demonstrated treasures of wisdom and knowledge which we possess. Now, love is a sign of grace; and undoubtedly David possessed in the highest degree that grace of which love is a sign. His psalms abound in such declarations as these: "O how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth

it." Mark, that to love the law of God for *that* reason—to love it *because* it is pure—to love its purity—is an undoubted sign of the highest degree of grace. *Kit.*

The position of David is virtually that of the Founder of the Jewish Monarchy. In this sense his name is repeated in every possible form. "The city of David," "The seed of David," "The house of David," "The key of David," "The oath sworn unto David," are expressions which pervade the whole subsequent history and poetry of the Old Testament, and much of the figurative language of the New. The self-indulgence, the too ready falsehood have appeared sufficiently in the events of his history. But there was a grace, a charm about him which entwined the affections of the nation round his person and his memory, and made him the head of a new civilization. He was a born king of Israel by his natural gifts. His immense activity and martial spirit united him by a natural succession to the earlier chiefs of Israel, while his accomplishments and genius fitted him especially to exercise a vast control over the whole future greatness of the Church and commonwealth. The force and passion of the ruder age was blended with a depth of emotion which broke out in every relation of life. Never before had there been such a faithful friend, such an affectionate father. Never before had king or chief inspired such passionate loyalty, or given it back in equal degree. The tenderness of his personal affection penetrated his public life. He loved his people with a pathetic compassion, beyond even that of Moses. Even from the history we gather that the ancient fear of God was, for the first time, passing into the love of God. But the hold which David has fixed on the memory of the Church and the world is of a deeper kind than any which he derives even from the romance of his life or the attractiveness of his character. He was not only the Founder of the Monarchy, but the Founder of the Psalter. He is the first great Poet of Israel. Although before his time there had been occasional bursts of Hebrew poetry, yet David is the first who gave it its fixed place in the Israelite worship. There is no room for it in the Mosaic ritual. Its absence there may be counted as a proof of the antiquity of that ritual in all its substantial features. For so mighty an innovation no less than a David was needed. That strange musical world of the East, with its gongs, and horns, and pipes, and harps, with its songs of question and answer, of strophe and antistrophe, awakening or soothing, to a degree inconceivable in our tamer West, the emotions

of the hearer, were seized by the shepherd minstrel when he mounted the throne, and were formed as his own peculiar province into a great ecclesiastical institution. The exquisite richness of verse and music so dear to him. "the calves of the lips," took the place of the costly offerings of animals. And in his writings he was a prophet, a revealer of a new world of religious truth scarcely inferior to Moses himself. *Stanley.*

The character of David has been naturally brought out in the incidents of his life. In the complexity of its elements, passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness—the soldier, the shepherd, the poet, the statesman, the priest, the prophet, the king—the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father—there is no character of the Old Testament at all to be compared to it. Jacob comes nearest in the variety of elements included within it. But David's character stands at a higher point of the sacred history, and represents the Jewish people just at the moment of their transition from the lofty virtues of the older system to the fuller civilization and cultivation of the later. In this manner he becomes naturally, if one may so say, the likeness or portrait of the last and grandest development of the nation and of the monarchy in the person and the period of the Messiah. In a sense more than figurative, he is the type and prophecy of Jesus Christ. Christ is not called the son of Abraham, or of Jacob, or of Moses, but he was truly "the son of David." *P. S.*

Called in youth from the quietude of the sheep-folds to be king over Israel; elevating the kingdom to a state of power and splendor which is seldom equalled, and perhaps never surpassed; and guiding it amid a crowd of perils with a wisdom and courage which made his name proverbial among his countrymen;—this man seems to stand far off from us in an atmosphere of wonder and glory; yet none of the Old Testament heroes comes nearer to our personal sympathies. *E. Hull.*—There never was a specimen of manhood so rich and ennobled as David, the son of Jesse, whom other saints haply may have equalled in single features of his character, but such a combination of manly, heroic qualities, such a flush of generous, Godlike excellences have never yet been seen embodied in a single man. *E. Irving.*

As a shepherd, keeping his father's sheep, the sense of responsibility to another was powerfully called into exercise. The flock was not his own. In keeping it, he was acting merely as his father's servant. To the people of Israel he

felt that he stood in the same relation as he had occupied to his father's sheep, and to God in the same place in which he had stood to his father. Israel was the flock of God, David the shepherd whom God employed to feed them. It was thus that David earned the title by which God distinguished him, "My servant David," and became the man "after God's own heart." And this formed one of the most striking resemblances between David and Christ. And this was David's pre-eminent distinction, to be called "a man after God's own heart." In his public conduct, he amply verified this designation. He was the father of his people; he loved them very tenderly; he used his authority for their good; he exerted himself to the utmost to advance the temporal and spiritual welfare of the kingdom. His high reverence for God, his intense thirsting after him, his trust, his gratitude, his delight in him, have never been surpassed, except by David's great Son. The very sins of David served to bring out some of his most remarkable qualities. He was never so great as in humiliation: his confessions were the deepest and most earnest that were ever poured out by human heart to God; and his penitential psalms have proved at once a guide and a solace to the penitent in every age and country of the world. Of all the Old Testament types of Christ, David was the most eminent. His oneness with his people; his uniting, in his kingly office, the gentleness of a shepherd with the might of a warrior—the lion and the lamb; his covenant relation to God as king of Israel; the incidents of his life,—first, the man of sorrows, then crowned with glory and honor; the intense glow of his loving heart; and last, not least, his singular trust, love, and reverence for God made him a more *complete* type of Christ than any other Old Testament worthy. W. G. B.

Under the Old Testament, the types of Christ were of three sorts: types of institution, providential, and personal types. The ordinance of sacrificing was the greatest of the instituted types; the redemption out of Egypt was the greatest of the providential types; and David the greatest of the personal types. Hence Christ is often called David in the prophecies of Scripture; as Ezek. 34:23, 24, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David;—my servant David a prince among them;" and so in many other places: and he is very often spoken of as the seed of David, and the son of David. *Edwards.*

David was a man perfectly gifted, exquisitely organized. He has personal beauty, daring, prowess, and skill in war. He has generosity,

nobleness, faithfulness, chivalry as of a mediæval and Christian knight. He is a musician, poet, seemingly an architect likewise. He is, moreover, a born king. He has a marvellous and most successful power of attracting, disciplining, ruling his fellow-men. So thoroughly human a personage is he, that God speaks of him as the man after His own heart; that our blessed Lord condescends to call himself especially the Son of David. For there is in this man a feminine, as well as a masculine vein; a passionate tenderness; a keen sensibility; a vast capacity of sympathy, sadness, and suffering, which makes him truly the type of Christ, the man of sorrows; which makes his Psalms to this day the text-book of the afflicted, of tens of thousands who have not a particle of his beauty, courage, genius; but yet can feel, in mean hovels and workhouse sick-beds, that the warrior poet speaks to their human hearts, and for their human hearts, as none other can speak, save Christ himself, the Son of David and the Son of man. *Kingsley.*

The hymns of David excel no less in sublimity and tenderness of expression than in loftiness and purity of religious sentiment. In comparison with them the sacred poetry of all other nations sinks into mediocrity. They have embodied so exquisitely the universal language of religious emotion, that they have entered with unquestioned propriety into the ritual of the holier and more perfect religion of Christ. The songs which cheered the solitude of the desert caves of Engedi, or resounded from the voice of the Hebrew people as they wound along the glens or the hill-sides of Judea, have been repeated for ages in almost every part of the habitable world, in the remotest islands of the ocean, among the forests of America or the sands of Africa. How many human hearts have they softened, purified, exalted!—of how many wretched beings have they been the secret consolation!—on how many communities have they drawn down the blessings of Divine Providence, by bringing the affections into unison with their deep devotional fervor. *Milman.*—Who can number the souls who for almost three thousand years have been comforted, strengthened, and raised up in their conflicts and their heart-anxieties, by contemplating the life and the words of David? Whoever seeks a God with whom there is "plenteous redemption," who hears prayer, who numbers the very hairs on the heads of His people, has an unchangeable love for them, and, as a Protector who neither slumbers nor sleeps, is by their side at every step—will meet with such a God in the experiences of

David, the king of Israel. No word of consolation is found in Scripture which was not confirmed in the actual experience of David. The golden chain of Divine condescensions and of gracious manifestations, by which his whole life was penetrated, marks it out as an introductory gospel, written in the characters of the actual life. How did David verify that word of the Eighty-fourth Psalm, "They who pass through the valley of weeping make it rich in springs!" *Krummacher.*

No one of all the eminent saints of the Old Testament so humbled himself in a sublime humility and grief for the Divine honor's sake. No one of them made the language of feeling bear on its free flow the grandeur and variety of God's holy law—in wealth of song and prayer and praise. Moses, the greatest of all before him, gave the law. David, like his Great Son, gave grace and truth to the law, by making patriotic occasions and personal attractions, and wealth of sensibility and royal affluence and every event great and small, exalt the worship and character of Jehovah, God of Israel. Abraham rejoiced to see the Messiah's day and was glad, but David seized upon God's gift to his own house of his Great Son, and looking down the coming line, bade himself and his successors call the Messiah, Lord. His great faults and great crimes were accompanied with such a great penitence and sublime submission to punishment, that God was not ashamed to select Bathsheba's son as the ancestor of Christ. Even with all his faults, David was a type of Christ. And therefore Christ, when he came in Bethlehem of Judah, was called THE SON OF DAVID. *Knox.*

Comprehensive Summary.

None of the great men of Scriptures pass through a course of so many changes; none of them touched human life at so many points; none of them were so tempered and polished by swift alternation of heat and cold, by such heavy blows and the friction of such rapid revolutions. Like his great Son and Lord, though in a lower sense, he, too, must be "in all points tempted like as we are," that his words may be fitted for the solace and strength of the whole world. Poets "learn in suffering what they teach in song." These quick transitions of fortune and this wide experience are the many-colored threads from which the rich web of his psalms is woven.

And while the life is singularly varied, the character is also singularly full and versatile. In this respect, too, he is most unlike the other

leading figures of Old Testament history. Contrast him, for example, with the stern majesty of Moses, austere and simple as the tables of stone; or with the unvarying tone in the gaunt strength of Elijah. These and the other mighty men in Israel are like the ruder instruments of music—the trumpet of Sinai, with its one prolonged note. David is like his own harp of many chords, through which the breath of God murmured, drawing forth wailing and rejoicing, the clear ring of triumphant trust, the low plaint of penitence, the blended harmonies of all devout emotions.

The man had his faults—grave enough. Let it be remembered that no one has judged them more rigorously than himself. The critics who have delighted to point at them have been anticipated by the penitent; and their indictment has been little more than the quotation of his own confession. His tremulously susceptible nature, especially assailable by the delights of sense, led him astray. There are traces in his life of occasional craft and untruthfulness which even the exigencies of exile and war do not wholly palliate. Flashes of fierce vengeance at times break from the clear sky of his generous nature. His strong affection became, in at least one case, weak and foolish fondness for an unworthy son. But when all this is admitted, there remains a wonderfully rich, lovable character. He is the very ideal of a minstrel hero, such as the legends of the East especially love to paint. The shepherd's staff or sling, the sword, the sceptre, and the lyre are equally familiar to his hands. That union of the soldier and the poet gives the life a peculiar charm.

Thus, on the one side, we see the true poetic temperament, with all its capacities for keenest delight and sharpest agony, with its tremulous mobility, its openness to every impression, its gaze of child-like wonder, and eager welcome to whatsoever things are lovely, its simplicity and self-forgetfulness, its yearnings "after worlds half-realized," its hunger for love, its pity, and its tears. He was made to be the inspired poet of the religious affections. And, on the other side, we see the greatest qualities of a military leader of the antique type, in which personal daring and a strong arm count for more than strategic skill. He dashes at Goliath with an enthusiasm of youthful courage and faith. While still in the earliest bloom of his manhood, at the head of his wild band of outlaws, he shows himself sagacious, full of resource, prudent in counsel, and swift as lightning in act; frank and generous, bold and gentle, cheery in defeat, calm in peril, patient in privations

and ready to share them with his men, modest and self-restrained in victory, chivalrous to his foes, ever watchful, ever hopeful—a born leader and king of men.

The basis of all was a profound, joyous trust in his Shepherd God, an ardor of personal love to Him, such as had never before been expressed, if it had ever found place, in Israel. That trust “opened his mouth to show forth” God’s praise, and strengthened his “fingers to fight.” He has told us himself what was his habitual temper, and how it was sustained: “I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Ps. 16). Thus endowed, he moved among men with that irresistible fascination which only the greatest exercise. From the day when he stole like a sunbeam into the darkened chamber where Saul wrestled with the evil spirit, he bows all hearts that come under his spell. The women of Israel chant his name with song and timbrel, the daughter of Saul confesses her love-unmasked, the noble soul of Jonathan cleaves to him, the rude outlaws in his little army peril their lives to gratify his longing for a draught from the well where he had watered his father’s flocks; the priests let him take the consecrated bread, and trust him with Goliath’s sword, from behind the altar; his lofty courtesy wins the heart of Abigail; the very king of the Philistines tells him that he is “good in his sight as an angel of God;” the unhappy Saul’s last word to him is a blessing; six hundred men of Gath forsake home and country to follow his fortunes when

he returns from exile; and even in the dark close of his reign, though sin and self-indulgence and neglect of his kingly duties had weakened his subjects’ loyalty, his flight before Absalom is brightened by instances of passionate devotion which no common character could have evoked; and even then his people are ready to die for him, and in their affectionate pride call him “the light of Israel.” It was a prophetic instinct which made Jesse call his youngest boy by a name apparently before unused—David, “Beloved.”

The Spirit of God, acting through these great natural gifts, and using this diversified experience of life, originated in him a new form of inspiration. The Law was the revelation of the mind, and, in some measure, of the heart, of God to man. The Psalm is the echo of the law, the return current set in motion by the outflow of the Divine will, the response of the heart of man to the manifested God. There had, indeed, been traces of hymns before David. There were the burst of triumph which the daughters of Israel sang, with timbrel and dance, over Pharaoh and his host; the prayer of Moses the man of God (Ps. 90), so archaic in its tone, bearing in every line the impress of the weary wilderness and the law of death; the song of the dying lawgiver (De. 32); the passionate pæan of Deborah; and some few briefer fragments. But practically the Psalm began with David; and though many hands struck the harp after him, he remains emphatically “the sweet Psalmist of Israel.” A. M.

Section 283.

SOLOMON'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE. HIS CHOICE OF WISDOM. HIS DIS-
CERNMENT OF THE TRUE MOTHER.

1 CHRONICLES 29 : 23-25. 2 CHRONICLES 1 : 1-13. 1 KINGS 3 : 4-28.

1 Chron. 29 : 23 THEN Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David
24 his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes, and the mighty
men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.
25 And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon
him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

2 Chron. 1 : 1 And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the
2 Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. And Solomon spake unto all
Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every prince
in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses.

2 Chron. 1 : 3 So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon ; for there was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of
4 the Lord had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kiriath-jearim to *the place* that David had prepared for it : for he had pitched a tent
5 for it at Jerusalem. Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the Lord : and Solomon and the
6 congregation sought unto it. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the Lord, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.
7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall
8 give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great kindness unto David my father, and hast made me king in his
9 stead. Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established : for thou hast made me king over a people like
10 the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people : for who can judge this thy people, that is so
11 great ? And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of them that hate thee, neither yet hast asked long life ; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king :
12 wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee ; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there
13 any after thee have the like. So Solomon came *from his journey* to the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting, unto Jerusalem ; and he reigned over Israel.

1 K. 3 : 4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there ; for that was the great high place : a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night : and God said, Ask what I shall give
6 thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great kindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is
7 this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father : and I am but a little child ; I
8 know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil ; for who is
9 able to judge this thy great people ? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon
10 had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ;
12 behold, I have done according to thy word : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall
13 any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee,
14 all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I
15 will lengthen thy days. And Solomon awoke, and, behold, it was a dream : and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

1 K. 3 : 16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood
17 before him. And the one woman said, Oh my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ;
18 and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also ; and we were together ; there was
19 no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. And this woman's child died in
20 the night ; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my
21 bosom. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead : but
22 when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. And

the other woman said, Nay ; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No ; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. 23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead : and 24 the other saith, Nay ; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. And the king said, 25 Fetch me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the 26 living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, Oh my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, It shall be 27 neither mine nor thine ; divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living 28 child, and in no wise slay it : she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged ; and they feared the king : for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

The comparative scantiness of historical *data* for a life of Solomon is itself significant. While that of David occupies more than sixty chapters, that of Solomon fills only the first eleven chapters of 1 K. and the first nine of 2 Chron. The writers give extracts only from larger works which were before them, "The Book of the Acts of Solomon ;" "the Book of Nathan the prophet, the Book of Ahijah the Shilonite, the visions of Iddo the seer." Some materials for the life of Solomon exist in the books that bear his name (Canticles ; Ecclesiastes ; Proverbs), and in the Psalms which are referred, on good grounds, to his time (Ps. 2, 45, 72, 127). Other materials are very scanty. The history of Josephus is, for the most part, only a loose and inaccurate paraphrase of the Old Testament narrative. *Dic. B.*—Perhaps the following is as probable as any cast of the events of Solomon's reign : first, three years during which affairs were becoming settled ; then seven years of building the temple, and thirteen years while the king's house was being builded, twenty years in all ; then the remaining seventeen years. W. J. B.

Solomon, the third king of Israel, is as unlike either of his predecessors as each of them is unlike the other. No person occupies so large a space in Sacred History of whom so few personal incidents are related. That stately and melancholy figure—in some respects the grandest and the saddest in the sacred volume—is, in detail, little more than a mighty shadow. But on the other hand, of his age, of his court, of his works, we know more than of any other. Now, for the first time since the Exodus, we find distinct traces of dates—years, months, days. Now at last we seem to come across monuments, which possibly remain to this day. Of the earlier ages of Jewish history, nothing has lasted to our time except it be the sepulchres and wells,—works of Nature rather than of men. But it is not beyond belief that the massive walls at the reservoirs near Bethlehem, the sub-

structures of the temple at Jerusalem, and at Baalbec, are from the age of Solomon. Now also we come within distinctly noted signs of contemporary history in the outer world. In the reign of Solomon we meet with an Egyptian sovereign, designated by his proper name—Shishak—and in his still-existing portraiture on the walls of Karnac, we have thus the first distinct image of one who beyond question had communicated with the chosen people. Now also the date to which we have attained, the thousandth year before the Christian era, brings us to a level with the beginning of the well-known Classical History of Greece and Italy. But the epoch is remarkable not only for its distinctness, but for its splendor. It is characteristic indeed of the Jewish records that, clearly as Solomon's greatness is portrayed at the time, it is rarely noticed in them again. Of all the characters of the Sacred History, he is the most purely secular ; and merely secular magnificence was an excrescence, not a native growth, of the chosen people. While Moses and David are often mentioned again in the sacred books, Solomon's name hardly occurs after the close of his reign. To have had many such characters in the Biblical History would have brought it down too nearly to the ordinary level. But to have one such is necessary to show that the interest which we inevitably feel in such events and such men has a place in the designs of Providence, and in the lessons of Revelation. *Stanley.*

Solomon found himself by his father's death the sole occupant of the throne. The position to which he succeeded was unique. Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take its place among the great monarchies of the East. Large treasures accumulated through many years were at his disposal. The people, with the exception of the tolerated worship in high places, were true servants of Jehovah. Knowledge, art, music, poetry had received a new impulse, and were moving on, with rapid

steps, to such perfection as the age and the race were capable of attaining. *Dic. B.*

The epoch of Solomon's reign marks the climax of the Hebrew monarchy, and, according to the usual law of human greatness, the beginning of its decline. Starting from the vantage-ground on which the kingdom had been placed by the conquests of David, through the favor of Jehovah, he preserved its ascendancy by a wisdom which has become proverbial, and prepared its downfall by his luxury and arrogance. Having achieved the greatest work done by any ruler of Israel since Moses, the building of the house of God upon Mount Moriah, and the settlement of His worship, he left to after times the name of

"That uxorious king, whose heart, though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul."

The author and compiler of the richest maxims of wisdom in the literature of the world, he so used up the resources of intellectual as well as sensual pleasure, as to end with the confession "Vanity of vanities! All is emptiness and vexation of spirit!" The life of Solomon presents a striking contrast to his father's in its uneventful character. His great work was the building of the House of God, commonly called the *Temple*, at Jerusalem. The rest of the history of his reign is chiefly occupied with the description of his magnificence and wealth, as the sovereign of what was then the greatest monarchy of Western Asia. P. S.

The sacred historians were guided to the preservation of what was of permanent value for the history of the kingdom of God. Mere worldly opulence and splendor has little instructiveness about it. A prolonged narrative of Solomon's magnificence and power would have had no moral value. Enough is told us to enable us to appreciate God's bounty to the young man who deliberately preferred wisdom to wealth and power, and to see the powerlessness of mere wisdom and culture, even of the highest kind, when dissevered from the fear and love of God, against human passion and human pride. Under Solomon the star of Israel continues still to rise for a time, and under him the zenith of the nation is reached. Yet his reign is not on that account greater than his father's, which was a continual growth from first to last. On the contrary, it is the lamentable distinction of Solomon's reign that with him, and largely in consequence of his faults, begins a decline which was never really arrested and which in the end proved fatal. The lesson of his life is

to a large extent that of Samson's and of Saul's combined: miraculous powers neutralized by self-indulgence; great natural gifts rendered baneful by desertion of God. Therefore a few scenes of splendor, the canker, and its consequences, are all that are needed to be told. The remainder, however flattering to himself and his age, has little instruction for us. Unlike his father, Solomon had never known the bracing influences of difficulty or adversity. Brought up in the expectation of a glorious crown, we can hardly wonder that his character does not bear the strain of the possession of enormous wealth and power. *Plummer.*

1 Chron. 29 : 23-25. *Solomon established and prospered in the kingdom by the favor of Jehovah.* A brief summary of much of his reign of forty years. The wide domain conquered and possessed by the father was for a long period wisely governed by the son. The immense riches—in stores of material of every sort, as well as precious metals and stones—gathered by David, were applied in part to the building of God's house. Another part he put into various channels of commerce. By means of wise compacts with other nations, by the construction of fleets and of broad roadways centring at his capital and traversing all his great cities, he caused this wealth to flow back again with marvellous increase. Beside the Temple, Solomon enlarged and beautified Jerusalem, built many cities, and constructed pools and other useful public works, some of which remain to the present day. In all this outward magnificence, and in the sagacity and justness with which he administered the affairs of his kingdom, we trace the evidence that God "magnified him exceedingly."

2 Chron. 1 : 2, 3 ; 1 K. 3 : 2-6. *With a retinue of the nation's representatives, Solomon offers a national sacrifice upon the altar of Moses, before the Tabernacle at Gibeon.* Gibeon was a city of the Levites, situated six miles north of Jerusalem upon the summit of the central ridge running northward. It is called (1 K. 3 : 4) the *great high-place*, since there the Tabernacle and sacrificial altar of Moses were finally placed. Why the Ark of the covenant, which belonged in the interior Holy Place of the Tabernacle, had been separated from the other sacred vessels, does not clearly appear. But, as we read here, David had deposited this in a temporary structure at Jerusalem. The old and now historic brazen altar, however, still remained in its place before the ancient Tabernacle of the wilderness. And to this, in a vast and solemn concourse of all the leaders, and princes, and prominent men

of the tribes, Solomon goes to offer formal sacrifice for himself and the people, early (the second year) in his reign. Here, under the king's direction, with the participation of the nation's representatives, a thousand burnt-offerings were offered; in recognition of God's establishment of a new reign, in acknowledgment of need through infirmity and transgression, and in supplication for Divine favor and prosperity upon King and people. By this significant act of national worship the reign began. B.

The situation of Gibeon is noble. Its hill is rounded and distinct, looking down on all sides on fruitful fields and orchards. The limestone rocks lie in horizontal strata, as if terraced by the hand of man, each step being clean cut and from six to ten feet high. Adjoining the village on the south is a broad surface, apparently artificially levelled, now planted with olive trees. We fancied that it was here that the tabernacle stood and the altar, when Solomon offered at a high festival a thousand burnt-offerings. *Dulles.* (*For cut, see p. 92.*)

1 K. 3:5. The sacrificial festival, prolonged according to custom for seven days, was drawing toward the close, when—as we are here definitely told—“in Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream.” But the dream had all the elements of reality, for God spoke to the mind, and quickened the mind to true action. This *we* are assured, and this Solomon himself perfectly knew. *Ask what I shall give thee!* is the gracious word by which God presses his munificence upon the youthful monarch. B. —The Lord came to press His gifts upon the acceptance of David's son; asking him to make his choice of all the gifts his almightiness enabled him to offer—or rather, of all that the man was capable of receiving. Whatever we may think of it—and practically we every day deny most of the things we profess to believe—God daily makes as large and liberal offers to us—ay, offers more liberal by far; and quite as surely will He bestow upon us what we ask, and much more, if that which we seek be well pleasing in his sight. *Kil.*

The call of God to his children is continually, “Ask what I shall give thee;” “Ask, and it shall be given you;” “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” And in response to this call of God, the true child of God is continually choosing, yet not choosing—choosing while he will not choose—in the matter of his heart longings, as he looks God-ward in prayer. He knows what he longs for, but he is not sure that he knows what is best for him; so, while his choice is naturally

in the direction of his longings, he wants God to choose that which he himself would choose if he saw the case as God sees it. He chooses to take what he craves,—if God sees that it is best for him to have that object of his craving; but he is unwilling to make an absolute choice—however strong are his yearnings in a given direction—while God alone is competent to decide as to the real desirableness of the thing desired. And so the choices of the true-hearted Christian believer are ever by choosing, yet not choosing, as he makes known his requests unto God. *S. S. Times.*

7-9. Within the sacred city of Gibeon occurred one of those prophetic dreams which had already been the means of Divine communication in the time of Samuel. Thrice in Solomon's life—at the three epochs of his rise, of his climax, of his fall—is such a warning recorded. This was the first. It was the choice offered to the youthful King on the threshold of life,—the choice, so often imagined in fiction, and actually presented in real life,—“Ask what I shall give thee.” The answer is the ideal answer of such a Prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He remembered the high antecedents of his predecessor—“Thou hast showed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before Thee in truth, and in uprightness, and in righteousness of heart with thee.” He remembered his own youth and weakness; “I am but a little child—I know not how to go out or to come in.” He remembered the vastness of his charge; “In the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen: a great people which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude: and who is able to judge this thy people that is so great.” He made the demand for the gift which he of all the heroes of the ancient Church was the first to claim: “Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.” *Stanley.*

Solomon calls himself a child only in respect to his skill in the management of public affairs, as is signified in the last words, “I know not how to go out,” etc.—that is, how to govern so great a people, for want of experience. Thus Benjamin is called a child (Gen. 44:20), although he was then above thirty years old. *Patrick.*—Absalom, who was a fool, wished himself a judge; Solomon, who was a wise man, trembles at the undertaking, and suspects his own fitness for it. The more knowing and considerate men are, the better they are acquainted with their own weakness, and the more jealous of themselves. H.

The special type of wisdom which Solomon asked—"an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad" (verse 9); "wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people" (2 Chron. 1 : 10)—was that sagacity, that intuitive apprehension of character and conduct, coupled with an unfailing sense of equity as between man which he needed as the supreme judge of Israel? H. C.—He does not ask that profound spiritual wisdom which would teach him to know God and his own heart : in this he was always far inferior to David. His prayer is for practical sagacity, clear intelligence, quick discernment, to see the right from the wrong amid the mazes of duplicity and doubt which beset the judge, especially among an Oriental people. And this gift he received. His aspirations, if not for the highest spiritual excellence, were for usefulness to his subjects and fellow-men, not for long life, riches, and victory for himself ; and because he had not selfishly asked these things, they were freely granted to him in addition to the gift he had chosen. P. S.

Solomon asked for wisdom to discharge the responsibilities of his kingly office. For this specific and subordinate use he sought it. He did not ask for God's own indwelling, inworking, and personal fellowship. He did not ask for strength in the will to resist evil, or grace in the heart to walk with God. He did not even seek wisdom to *know God* and to *serve Him*, and so obey the charge of David and command of God. Only for his own and his people's advantage, he asked for the intellectual gift of clear comprehensive perception and of just discriminating judgment. And because his request was *comparatively* good, far better than the reigning desires in most men's hearts, God gave him marvellous discernment and judgment, and added also great wealth and power. But it deserves note that no recorded word or prayer of Solomon shows any yearning after inward godliness, any personal consecration to, or habitual communion with, God. In the significant absence of the spirit of piety, we find a distinctive difference in the character of Solomon as compared with that of David. And to this difference we trace the subsequent effects of Solomon's deeper, more protracted fall. B.—His prayer at Gibeon, high and noble as it was, and "pleasing to the Lord," was not the highest. It is the prayer of one who seeks to be self-sufficing rather than of one who feels that dependence on God is his only hope and stay. David would have asked, had he had the choice, to be delivered from his transgressions, to have

a clean heart and a right spirit, to hold fast by God. The widest range of wisdom without that spirit was worthless, not only in God's eyes but for bringing peace to the heart. This truth Solomon, with all his varied knowledge, did not know ; and had to learn it through a dreary round of the bitterest disappointments. *Plummer.*

To pray for a thinking and understanding mind is a most necessary and a most Christian prayer. The gift of wisdom is the subject of almost one whole book of the Bible, the Proverbs. Paul prays, and bids others pray, for an enlightened understanding, for the fulness of wisdom. James says, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him." Without thoughtfulness there can be no goodness, nor any holiness. . . . By asking God to give us a wise and understanding heart, we confess to ourselves that our opinions and judgments are serious things, for we do not bring mere trifles before God's notice in our prayers ; and that, being serious things, they demand our own serious care ; that duty and sin belong to them ; that as our salvation depends on our lives, so our lives depend upon our thoughts and judgments : for if we act ill because we have judged ill, and have judged ill because we took no pains to judge well, then the sin is not taken away from our act but remains in it : and the act was an act of what Scripture calls folly, the folly which sees not and regards not God. Whatever be our business in life, if we make it a part of our daily prayers to God that He will give us understanding in it ; that He will assist our judgment, so that, seeing what is right and true, we may maintain and follow it both in word and deed ; I do not doubt that such prayers will be answered, and that where we now act blindly and carelessly, according to any prevailing feeling or fancy, there we shall act upon the full persuasion of our minds, and that persuasion will be in general according to the will of God. *T. Arnold.*

2 Chron. 1 : 11, 12. Because Solomon hath asked what he should, he shall now receive both what he asked and what he asked not : riches and honor shall be given him into the match. So doth God love a good choice, that he recompenses it with overgiving. Could we but first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these earthly things should be superadded to us. Had Solomon made wealth his boon, he had failed both of riches and wisdom ; now he asks the best, and speeds of all. They

are in a fair way of happiness, that can pray well. *Bp. H.*—He who applies his heart to wisdom, does, at the same time, take the most proper method of gaining long life, riches, and reputation, which are very often not only the rewards, but the effects of wisdom. *Addison.*

God gave Solomon wisdom. He fitted him for all that great work to which he had called him; gave him such a right understanding of the law which he was to judge by, and the cases he was to judge of, that he was unequalled, for a clear head, a solid judgment, and a piercing eye. Such an insight, and such a foresight, never was prince so blessed with. He gave him riches and honor over and above into the bargain, and it was promised that he should as much exceed his predecessors, his successors, and all his neighbors, in these, as in wisdom. These also are God's gift, and are promised to all that *seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*, as far as is good for them (Matt. 6 : 23). *H.*—The wealth and magnificence of Solomon were almost as proverbial as his wisdom (1 K. 10 : 23 ; Matt. 6 : 29). God gave Solomon his riches and renown. And all who possess any form of earthly good have likewise received it from Him. These earthly gifts should be received with thankfulness, and used for the glory of their Giver. But when they are withheld from any one, this is no proof of the Divine displeasure; nor is their bestowment a proof that he who receives them is specially approved of God. *W. H. G.*

1 K. 3 : 14. We may notice that while the promises of great wisdom and great wealth were absolute (without conditions), the promise of long life was made upon conditions—viz., of his steadfastness in the ways of his father David. In this point Solomon sadly failed, and consequently failed to realize the long life conditionally promised. He is supposed to have ascended the throne at an age not exceeding twenty. Having reigned forty, he died at the age of sixty—not by any means an old man. *H. C.*

15. Behold, it was a dream. The vivid impression, the indelible recollection he had of this dream, together with the new and increased energy communicated to his mind, and the flow of worldly prosperity that rushed upon him, gave him assurance that it came by Divine inspiration, and originated in the grace of God. The wisdom, however, that was asked and obtained was not so much of the heart as the head—it was wisdom not for himself personally, but for his office, such as would qualify him for the administration of justice, the government of a

kingdom, and for the attainment of general scientific knowledge. *Jamieson.*

Came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark, and offered. No marvel if Solomon, now returning from the tabernacle to the ark, testified his joy and thankfulness by burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, and public feastings. The heart that hath found in itself the lively testimonies of God's presence and favor cannot contain itself from outward expressions. *Bp. H.*

Two Mothers, with a Dead and a Living Child.

1 K. 3 : 16-27.

An occasion soon arose, to prove his Divine gift of sagacity. Two women appeared before his judgment-seat with a dead and a living infant. The one who appealed to the king for justice alleged that they had both been delivered in the same house, the other woman three days after herself; that the other had overlaid her child in the night, and had exchanged its corpse for the living child of the first while she slept. *P. S.*—A monarch's sagacity in the administration of justice was calculated to make the most marked impression upon the popular mind, and likely to be most generally talked about through the land. This quality also came more home to the personal concerns of his subjects than any other, and was for that reason alone the more carefully regarded. The administration of justice was in all ancient monarchies, as it is now in the East, a most important part of the royal duties and functions; and there is no quality more highly prized than that keen discernment in the royal judge which detects the clew of real evidence amid conflicting testimony, or that ready tact which devises a test of truth where the evidence affords not even the clew to any grounds of decision. It was an instance of this kind which supplied to the watchful people the first evidence of the marvellous judicial sagacity with which their king was endowed. Two mothers, one of whom had lost her son, contend for the possession of the living child; and the king, having to decide which of the two has the best claim to it, detects the real mother by the emotion she evinces when he orders the living child to be divided, and half given to each; and by her readiness to abandon her claim rather than see the child perish before her eyes. *Kit.*

20, 22. The impossibility of proof makes the guilty more confident, more impudent. The true mother pleads that her child was taken away at midnight, by the other, but in her sleep; she saw it not; she felt it not; and

if all her senses could have witnessed it, yet here was but the affirmation of the one against the denial of the other, which in persons alike credible do but counterpoise. **24, 25.** Solomon well saw that when all outward proofs failed there was an inward affection, which, if it could be fetched out, would certainly bewray the true mother. He knew that sorrow might more easily be dissembled than natural love: both sorrowed for their own; both could not love one, as theirs: to draw forth then this true proof of motherhood, Solomon calls for a sword, and commands, "Divide the living child in two."

26, 27. This sword has already pierced the breast of the true mother, and divided her heart with fear and grief at so killing a sentence. There needs no other rack to discover nature; and now, while she thinks on the cruelty of such a sentence, she sees to that suspected mercy of her just judge, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in nowise slay it;" as thinking, "If he live, he will but change his mother: if he die, his mother loses a son—it is better he should live to a wrong mother than to neither." On the contrary, her envious competitor, as holding herself well satisfied that her neighbor should be as childless as herself, can say, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." Well might Solomon and every hearer conclude that either she was no mother, or a monster that could be content with the murder of her child: and that if she could have been the true mother, and yet have desired the blood of her infant, she would have deserved as much to have been stripped of her child for her unnatural disposition, as the other would have deserved to possess him for her honest compassion. Not more justly, therefore, than wisely doth Solomon trace the true mother by the footsteps of love and pity, and adjudge the child to those bowels that had yearned at his danger. *Rp. H.*

27. The king was pondering the words of the two women. At last he broke forth in the language of the mother who had said, "Give her the living child, and in nowise slay it." And to that sentence, taken as representative of the person who had spoken it, he adds his own decision, "She is the mother thereof." *Bernard.*

28. Solomon's decision in its results was most important to him: for it evinced, in the judgment of the people, his fitness to fill worthily the high place to which he had been raised. Of this some doubt and misgiving appear to have been previously entertained, on account of his age—too young for experience, yet too old for a regency. But now all this was at an end. He had delivered a judgment which the most ri-

pened experience could not surpass. "They saw that the wisdom of God was with him to do judgment:" and thenceforth they regarded him with the respect and veneration due to riper years. *AR.*

The response of Solomon, more fully given in First Kings, is to be studied in connection with the reply of God. The request was for wisdom and knowledge, and this in order to discharge the responsibilities of his kingly office. It was a wise request, and was approved of God. But the terms of His approval show exactly the character of the request and how far that approval went. Because Solomon had not asked riches, wealth, honor, long life, nor revenge upon his enemies, none of those desires which are foremost with men and universally cherished, God gave the desired wisdom, and added great wealth and honor. Yet, it should be carefully noted, that while asking for that which was comparatively excellent, far better than the things men commonly ask in their hearts, Solomon did not ask for the ever-present guidance and grace of the Spirit of God. He showed wisdom, good judgment, in asking for wisdom. But he did not evince the spirit of an inward godliness, or controlling piety, like that which life-long actuated the heart of David. This marked essential difference characterizes the two lives, and distinguishes the inspired writings of father and son. In these writings we trace this difference in the effect upon each of the transgressions of middle and later life. Throughout the Psalms there is an outpouring of the heart in trust and penitence, in love and aspiration. But the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes mainly reveal a sharpened conscience, and a clear, cold, sometimes almost feelingless intellect tracing the courses and effects of good and evil doing in actual life-experience. Were it not for a few Proverbs and for the richly wrought Allegory entitled the Song of Solomon, there would be little relief for our sadness in the retrospect of a life so endowed with all gifts outwardly attractive and intellectually beautiful. Let it be remembered, then, that the choice of Solomon, though comparatively far superior to ordinary human choices, was not the highest and best. Wisdom for his own use, to guide and control his action as ruler, to employ the best means in securing the most desirable ends in his government and care of the people, this was the wish of his heart that God approved and granted. But to the grant, God subjoins the conditional and warning words, "if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father

David did walk ;' an intimation that strength in the will and grace in the heart must be Divinely added to wisdom of the understanding. That Solomon's wisdom did not suffice for this needed Divine grace, that his excelling wisdom did not help him to keep God's statutes and commandments, we read full plainly in his whole after history. B.

When still in his youth, Solomon received from God the gift of wisdom, that he might judge Israel righteously. Is this sufficient reason for laying to God's account Solomon's entire life, his luxury, his excesses, even his idolatry? Are we not expressly told, "The Lord was angry with Solomon?" and do not facts confirm this declaration? Further, while the name of David often occurs in the writings of prophets and apostles, not once does the name of Solomon cross their lips. Are not these sufficiently striking signs of the Divine disapprobation of this reign, which was as morally disastrous as it was outwardly brilliant? *Godet.*

Practically, in view of the youthful vigor normally accorded to virtuous young men, and the possibilities that lie within the grasp of earnest, persevering endeavor, God says to every young man as he said to Solomon—"Ask what I shall give thee!" Make choice of the ends you would accomplish in life. If they are worthy ends my blessing shall be upon you. According to your faith it shall be done. Any young man can choose as Solomon did to "*serve his generation according to the will of God*"—to do the very duties which God in providence lays before his hand, and to do those duties in the best manner possible to him with his powers and opportunities. This virtuous noble purpose is one of the first and best possibilities of every young man. He *can* be, in this highest sense, *good*. He can consecrate to the service of God in the line of labor for human well-being whatever

powers God gives him. So doing he may be confident of two things: that his choice will please God, and that God will give him success—most surely of all, success in his endeavors to please God truly and serve him faithfully, than which no other success can be greater or better.

Again, the case as presented here is good both for proof and for illustration of the principle that when men "covet earnestly" and supremely the best gifts, God loves not only to give these best things thus preferably and supremely sought, but to throw in the lesser things as unasked gratuities—in business phrase, "into the bargain." God gave Solomon not only the wise and understanding heart to rule well—that which he specially sought; but also great wisdom in other directions; immense riches, moreover, and unsurpassed honors. It seems to have been very easy for the Lord to throw in all these lesser things, and make no particular account of them. They were so much extra—a kind of bonus, which signifies the rich munificence of the Giver, and the gushing fulness of his heart toward that unselfish virtue which is so like God, and which he so naturally enjoys when he sees it in his creatures. Moreover, this case suggests the general law as propounded by Jesus in his great sermon: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things," food, raiment, these lower blessings, "shall be added unto you." They shall be thrown in, almost without your asking. Give your full heart and chief endeavor to seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and God will see to the filling of your cup with earthly good as may be best for you in his sight. Hence we may conclude that the principle on which God blessed Solomon was not exceptional but general. Anybody can have blessings from God on the same principle, good blessings, the Lord himself being judge as to what is really good for any one of us personally to have. "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is," and in no trivial sense. H. C.

Section 284.

PUNISHMENT OF ADONIJAH, JOAB, ABIATHAR, AND SHIMEI.

1 KINGS 2 : 12-46.

2 12 AND Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father ; and his kingdom was estab-
 13 lished greatly. Then Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon.
 14 And she said, Comest thou peaceably ? And he said, Peaceably. He said, moreover, I have
 15 somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. And he said, Thou knowest that the
 kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign : howbeit the
 16 kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's : for it was his from the LORD. And
 17 now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. And he
 said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king (for he will not say thee nay), that he give me
 18 Abishag the Shunammite to wife. And Bathsheba said, Well ; I will speak for thee unto the
 19 king. Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And
 the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and
 20 caused a throne to be set for the king's mother ; and she sat on his right hand. Then she
 said, I ask one small petition of thee ; deny me not. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my
 21 mother : for I will not deny thee. And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to
 22 Adonijah thy brother to wife. And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And
 why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah ? ask for him the kingdom also ; for
 he is mine elder brother ; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of
 23 Zeruiah. Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if
 24 Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. Now therefore as the LORD liveth,
 who hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made
 25 me an house, as he promised, surely Adonijah shall be put to death this day. And king
 Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada : and he fell upon him, that he died.
 26 And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields ; for
 thou art worthy of death : but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest
 the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou wast afflicted in all wherein
 27 my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD ;
 that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in
 28 Shiloh. And the tidings came to Joab : for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned
 not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the Tent of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of
 29 the altar. And it was told king Solomon, Joab is fled unto the Tent of the LORD, and, be-
 hold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall
 30 upon him. And Benaiah came to the Tent of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the
 king, Come forth. And he said, Nay ; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word
 31 again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. And the king said unto him, Do
 as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him ; that thou mayest take away the blood,
 32 which Joab shed without cause from me and from my father's house. And the LORD shall re-
 turn his blood upon his own head, because he fell upon two men more righteous and better
 than he, and slew them with the sword, and my father David knew it not, *to wit*, Abner the
 son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of
 33 Judah. So shall their blood return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for-
 ever : but unto David, and unto his seed, and unto his house, and unto his throne, shall there
 34 be peace forever from the LORD. Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon
 35 him, and slew him ; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. And the king
 put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host : and Zadok the priest did the king
 36 put in the room of Abiathar. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him,
 37 Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For
 on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, know thou for certain that thou
 38 shalt surely die : thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And Shimei said unto the king,
 The saying is good : as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt

39 in Jerusalem many days. And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, 40 saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish, to seek his servants : and Shimei went, and brought his servants from 41 Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come 42 again. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for certain, that on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, 43 The saying that I have heard is good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, 44 and the commandment that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my 45 father : therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head. But king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for- 46 ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; and he went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

Adonijah's Request of Bathsheba.

Verses 12-18.

15-17. Adonijah does not hide from the king's mother the soreness he felt in having been set aside. But he does more. With an unaccountable disregard of a settlement, which it was at his peril to disturb, he reproaches Bathsheba with the honor Solomon had gained, not by merit or by right, but only by means to be spoken lightly of. " Mine was the crown, thou knowest ; to me had all Israel set their faces to reign ; howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's, for it was his from Jehovah." No other meaning could be put on these words than, " Feeling myself to have been wronged, I am cherishing the hope of one day righting that wrong." But Bathsheba had not quickness of wit to read his thoughts. He proceeded, " Speak now to Solomon the king, for he will not say thee nay, that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife." There is not a word of love or of beauty in the request preferred to Bathsheba. There is a soreness of feeling at having lost a grander prize than the fairest maiden in Israel ; but no one can gather from Adonijah's words that he cared for either her beauty or her youth. The prince was thinking of other things. *Sime.*

18. The good-natured Bathsheba, anxious to soothe his wounded pride, and to make what seemed to her a harmless atonement for the frustration of his hopes, in which she herself had been an instrument, noticed none of the latent and dangerous meanings involved in these things, but hastened to assure him of her readiness to undertake the mission he proposed. One might suppose that she would have been a little shocked at the grossness involved in the idea of a son espousing his father's widow,—the rather, as she was unconscious of his real object, which

would have rendered the matter more intelligible to her. But the truth obviously is, that, strict as was the law respecting intermarriages—strict beyond the law of any nation, a great practical laxity had grown up in these matters, especially at the royal court. *Kit.*—Bathsheba does not seem to have suspected Adonijah's design, and this simplicity of hers he perhaps hoped to trade upon, and thought that his petition, coming to Solomon through her, might appear less dangerous. That she should consent to ask the king was not unnatural. " The damsel was very fair" (1 : 4) and Adonijah " a very goodly man" (1 : 6), and such a marriage might appear to her not unfitting. *A. F. K.*

19. No sooner doth Bathsheba come in place than Solomon her son rises from his chair of state, meets her and bows to her, and sets her on his right hand ; as not so remembering himself to be a king, that he should forget he was a son. Yet for all these due compliments Bathsheba goes away with a denial. Reverence she shall have, she shall not have a compliance. In the acts of magistracy all regards of natural relations must give way. That which she propounded as a small request is rejected as unreasonable. Bathsheba makes a petition against herself and knows it not : her safety and life depend upon Solomon's reign ; yet she unwittingly moves for the advancement of Adonijah. Solomon was too dutiful to check his mother and too wise to yield to her ; in unfit supplications we are most heard when we are most repelled. Thus doth our God many times answer our prayers with merciful denials ; and most blesteth us in crossing our desires. *Bp H.*

22. Ask for him the kingdom also. Solomon gently reprehends her ignorance ; but his answer means, Do you call this a small petition ? You might as well ask the kingdom for him. For the laws and constitution of the gov-

ernment made it illegal for any one, besides the king and his successors, to take to himself any of the royal widows, concubines, servants, or anything else appropriated to the prince. Solomon, therefore, considered this as a new scheme of Adonijah against himself and his throne.

Patrick. — **And for Abiathar and Joab.** These two having aided Adonijah in his attempt on the throne, would naturally have been his chief ministers and advisers had he succeeded. So Solomon includes them with him, and thus Bathsheba may see whither the design of Adonijah is tending. *A. F. K.* — By the advice of these two wily friends, probably, Adonijah had asked the concubine of David for himself to wife, in order to make good thereby his claim to the throne. If Solomon had given him Abishag, he would thereby have acknowledged his claims in the eyes of the people. For the Israelites regarded the wives and concubines of the deceased king as the property of his successor. *Keil.* — The words can mean nothing else than that he discerned in this application the first development of a further design upon the crown, concocted between these men, of which he had already some information, but of which this was the first tangible intimation on which he could act. And he did act—and that with an unhesitating promptitude which justly shocks those who look not beyond the simple fact which appears in the face of the transaction. *Kil.*

There is no ground of censure upon Solomon for cruelty or precipitation in this instance. He had pardoned Adonijah's former conspiracy; but this new attempt was rebellion against the viceroy appointed by the Divine King, and called for condign punishment. *Jamieson.* — He knew that his brother had made one deliberate effort to supplant him, and therefore he could only conclude that this was a second, though veiled, attempt to deprive him of his kingdom. It is to be remembered that on the occasion of Adonijah's first rebellion the young monarch had displayed the greatest magnanimity toward him. He might then have justly decreed against him the death which no doubt the conspirators had designed against him. Adonijah, by fleeing to the altar, showed that he had good grounds for fearing the avenging sword. He was clearly conscious that he had merited the death of the traitor. But Solomon spared him, during good behavior. He warned him that "if wickedness were found in him" he should die. His first treason, consequently, was not to be lost sight of in case he were guilty of a fresh offence. This renewed attempt, after failure and forgive-

ness, must have convinced the king that Adonijah's pretensions would be a standing menace to the peace and prosperity of his empire, and therefore he owed it to himself, to his subjects, and above all to God who had intrusted him with the crown, to put this restless and dangerous plotter out of the way. To pass over a second offence would be a virtual encouragement of sedition, for it would show that the king was weak and might be trifled with. Adonijah therefore must die, not only in expiation of his treason, but as an example to the subjects of Solomon, that the disaffected, including all Adonijah's partisans, might be awed into obedience. *Hammond.*

24. He condemns him to die immediately—*He shall be put to death this day.* God had interposed himself with an oath, that he would establish David's throne (Ps. 89 : 35), and therefore Solomon pledges the same assurance to secure that establishment, by cutting off the enemies of it. "As God liveth, that establisheth the government, Adonijah shall die, that would unsettle it." *H.* — To punish with death so cunning and mean an intrigue can scarcely be called excessive severity on the part of Solomon. It was necessary if tranquillity was to be preserved in the land, all the more that, by his own admission, Adonijah still entertained the opinion that rightfully the kingdom was his, and that "all Israel set their faces on him that he should reign" (verse 15). *A. E.* — The failure of his first conspiracy, the abject terror which followed, the flight to the sanctuary, the clinging to the horns of the altar, the entreaty for life—these things should have been remembered, should have "changed his hand and checked his pride." Still more, his brother's magnanimity, "there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth;" or, if not that, his message, "If wickedness be found in him he shall die." All are of no avail. The passion for empire, like the passion for play, is almost incurable. Adonijah was playing for a throne: he staked honor, safety, piety—and lost. He played again—and this time a drawn sword was suspended over his head—he staked his life, and lost it. *Hammond.*

26. The head of the conspiracy was removed. But the real chiefs of the party, Joab and Abiathar, could not be allowed to escape. They were both in Jerusalem waiting the result of their first move in this game of treason. A king's messenger summoned the priest to Solomon's presence. "Worthy of death art thou," the king said, "but I will not at this time put thee to death. Get thee to Anathoth to thine own estate." The ground on which the doom

of death was remitted was honorable to the king. The priest, who had shared all David's wanderings and dangers, could not be slain as a traitor by David's son. He was finally thrust from the office of high-priest; he was banished from court. *Sime.*—As accomplice in the conspiracy of Adonijah, he had in strict justice deserved death; but Solomon spares his life partly on account of his priestly dignity, partly on account of the sufferings, hardships, and dangers in which he had participated with David in his protracted flight from Saul; removes him from the priesthood which he had forfeited by resisting the anointed of the Lord, and banishes him to his country-seat at Anathoth. *Keil.*

27. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord, that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh (1 S. 2 : 31-35). Abiathar was the last descendant of the house of Ithamar. With his deposition the high priesthood reverted to the house of Eleazar, and so another "word of the Lord" had its fulfilment. No one can justly accuse Solomon of unnecessary severity or of cruelty in his treatment of Abiathar. On the occasion of his first conspiracy, Abiathar seems to have escaped even censure. And yet that conspiracy, had it succeeded, would almost certainly have involved Solomon's death. He is now found plotting again, for the action of Solomon proves that there had been a second plot. Oriental usages would have justified his death. He is simply warned and banished. *Hammond.*—It was fourscore years since the sentence of judgment was denounced against the house of Eli: now it comes to execution. This just quarrel against Abiathar, the last of that line, shall make good the threatened judgment. The wickedness of Eli's house was neither purged by sacrifice nor obliterated by time. If God pay slowly yet he pays surely. Delay of most certain punishment is neither any hindrance to his justice, nor any comfort to our miseries. *Bp. H.*

Punishment of Joab.

Verses 23-34.

28. Joab flees to the altar. Had Joab sought for counsel from the tabernacle, he had not now needed to seek to it for refuge: if his devotions had not been wanting to that altar, he had not needed it for shelter. It is the fashion of our foolish presumption to look for protection where we have not cared to yield obedience. Even a Joab clings to God's altar in his extremity, which in his prosperity he regarded not. The

worst men would be glad to make use of God's ordinances for their advantage. Necessity will drive the most profane and lawless man to God. *Bp. H.*

Unless Joab knew himself guilty, and supposed from the execution of Adonijah that all was known to the king, there was nothing in what had happened to lead him to conclude himself in danger. Whatever wrong or treason might be latent in Adonijah's application for Abishag, there was nothing, taking that matter by itself, to connect Joab with it; but his own act, and the words of the king, show that there was something more, within and beyond this, with which he was connected, and which involved him in the doom of Adonijah. The past offence of this prince had been overlooked. Solomon had pledged his royal word to respect his life so long as he should show himself a worthy man. That he is punished, therefore, shows that there was a new offence of the same nature; and it was Joab's part in this, not his share in the old offence, for which Adonijah himself had been pardoned, that supplied Solomon with the occasion of executing the injunctions of his father. *Kit.*

Joab had rendered great services to the State, but he had treacherously murdered Abner and Amasa, and had been guilty of treason in the conspiracy of Adonijah. And the fact here stated, his flight to the place of the altar, clearly intimates his complicity with the evident design of Adonijah to renew his attempt to obtain the throne. These reasons fully justify the judicial act of Solomon in slaying him even at the altar (Ex. 21 : 14). *B.*—Let us learn from it, that it is not in the power of any of our services to buy off the penalty due to our sins. That penalty remains written in the great book of death against us. The hand is not ours—the power is not on earth that can cancel that page, or blot out the handwriting against us. But there is One that can do it—who for our sakes purchased at no mean price the right to do it. And he *will* do it if, with true faith in his power and with truly humble hearts, we ask him. *Kit.*

31. From me. Solomon evidently believed that the guilt of blood was upon him and his house so long as Abner's and Amasa's blood remained unavenged ("The blood that is not required from the murderer will be required from the magistrate." *Henry*), and that he and his seed might have to answer for it, as Saul's seed had done. This is one of the many considerations which show that both David and Solomon were actuated not by "cold-blooded vengeance" or "long-cherished resentment," but by a sense

of duty. In fact, Jewish law imperatively demanded the death of Joab, and to spare him was to violate all law, and to imperil the throne and the people. "Only a superficial observer," says Ewald, "can here reproach Solomon with needless severity." *Hammond.*

34. So Benaiah slew him. In this act Solomon fulfils the will of a father and the charge of God; concluding, upon this just execution, that "upon David, and upon his seed, there shall be peace forever from the Lord" (verse 33), and inferring that without this there could have been no peace. *Bp. II.*—So persuaded is Solomon that he is fulfilling a religious duty in decreeing the execution of Joab; so little thought has he of malice, revenge, or any baser motive, that he counts on the Divine blessing in perpetuity for the deed. *Hammond.*

The execution of Joab was clearly a judicial act. He had defiled the land by the blood of his own murders, and from which, in virtue of his own power and formidableness to David, it never had been cleansed during all the life of that monarch. Nothing can be more explicit and authoritative than the law of God on this subject, as laid down in Nu. 35, or more peremptory than the saying of verse 33—that "the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." And so the cruel and perfidious murders of Abner and Amasa are made to return on the head of the perpetrator. *T. C.*—There is a *lex talionis* which governs the dealings of God with transgressors. The cruel murderer shall be cruelly murdered. The assassin shall be executed at the altar. He that "showed no pity" shall receive none. *God pays sure, even if he pays slowly.* It was thirty-four years—an entire generation—since Abner's blood first cried from the ground. . . . After David, Joab was by far the greatest man—the ablest general, the bravest soldier, the most capable statesman—of that age. He had fought David's battles, won his conquests, captured his citadel, and twice preserved for him his crown. It is a sad and tragic ending of such a brilliant career. The idol of the army, the man who was first in the deadly breach, the ever-victorious hero, dies miserably, by the thrust of an old comrade. *Hammond.*

Buried. Now hath Joab paid all his arrears by the sword of Benaiah. There is no suit against his corpse; that hath the honor of a burial fit for a peer of Israel, for the near cousin to the king. Death puts an end to all quarrels. Solomon strikes off the score when God is satisfied. "The revenge that survives death and will not be shut up in the coffin is

barbarous and unbeseeming true Israelites. *Bp. II.*

Shimei's Punishment.

Verses 36-46.

36-41. In marked contrast to the summary punishment of other intriguers stands Solomon's dealing with Shimei. So far from taking the vengeance on him that David bequeathed to his heir as a duty, he grants him fair conditions of peace. Forbearance toward Shimei clearly implies good ground for the king's dealings with Adonijah and Joab. However, Shimei was a dangerous man. His home was far removed from court, and treason might be hatched under his roof without a chance of discovery. He lived among his own tribesmen, in the midst of friends who had shown their regard for him at a time when few would have stood side by side with a traitor. He was also too far off to be easily reached by the young king's arm. And as he was nearer to Abiathar's estate at Anathoth than to the king's palace, it was unsafe to allow materials so apt to catch fire to lie in the same neighborhood. Hence he was told by Solomon to build a house for himself in Jerusalem. Imprisonment within the bounds of that city was the condition on which his life was spared. For three years he regarded the condition. But lapse of time then made him forgetful or bold. When twenty years younger, he had been guilty of incredible folly during David's flight from Zion. Longer experience of life had evidently made him no wiser. One day two of his slaves were missing. That they had fled from their master is no proof of cruelty on his part; but it leaves an unfavorable impression on our minds. Shimei soon learned that the fugitives were hiding in Gath, which seems to be the meaning of the words that they had fled to Achish-ben-Maachah, king of Gath, a tributary of the Hebrews. Too impulsive, or too angry, he immediately started on a journey to that city, claimed the fugitives from the king, and returned with them to Jerusalem. The Benjamite had many enemies in Zion. The survivors of David's guards alone, mindful of the stone-throwing at Bahurim, and aware of his sentence, would be quick to catch him in the act of breaking his engagements with the king. They were as quick to inform their master. A royal messenger summoned the offender to the palace. His imprisonment within the bounds of the city, and the condition attached, were called to his remembrance. *Sime.*

41-44. Solomon receives information that Shimei had transgressed. The king sends for

him, and charges him with the *present crime*, that he had put a great contempt upon the authority and wrath both of God and the king; that he had broken *the oath of the Lord*, and disobeyed the commandment of his prince; and by this it appeared that he would not be held by the bonds of gratitude or conscience: had he represented to Solomon the urgency of the occasion, and begged leave to go, Solomon might have given him leave; but to presume either upon his ignorance or his connivance was to affront him in the highest degree. He condemns him for his *former crime*, cursing David, and throwing stones at him in the day of his affliction: *the wickedness which thy heart is privy to*. Others knew of Shimei's cursing David, but Shimei himself knew of the wicked principles of hatred and malice against David which he displayed in cursing him, and that his submission was but feigned and forced. H.—If this act of Shimei's was small, yet the circumstances were deadly: the commands of sovereign authority make the slightest duties weighty. If his journey was harmless, yet his disobedience was far otherwise. It is not for subjects to poise the prince's charge in the scale of their weak constructions. But besides the command, here was a mutual adjuration. Shimei swore that he would not go; Solomon swore his death if he went. If Shimei was false in offending, Solomon will be just in punishing. Now, therefore, the tongue that cursed the Lord's anointed receives its requital. Vengeance against rebels may sleep, but it cannot die. *Bp. H.*

Shimei cannot be exculpated. If he wished to remain true to his oath, he should have informed the king of the flight of his slaves, petitioned him for leave to bring them back, and awaited his directions; but he ought not to have lightly broken his oath. In his perjury lay his guilt, and he had no excuse, as Solomon showed him; to which was added his high treason committed against David. In the punishment of this crime, Solomon thus only vindicated the Divine right. *Keil.*—Shimei had been fully warned of this result, and had accepted the condition. Had he refused, he would probably have been kept in close confinement; but since he had accepted, he was allowed full freedom within the assigned limits. The opportunity of leaving the city was allowed him, simply because he had pledged himself not to avail himself to it. The restriction put upon him was meant to guard against, not so much his escape (for if he escaped, how was he to be put to death?) as against occasional absences,

during which he might plot and conspire, and then return until matters should be ripe for his final disappearance. And as the king had imposed a simple and clear regulation, he was not bound to burden himself with a particular inquiry into the validity of all the excuses which might from time to time be produced for its infraction. How, for instance, in this very case, was the king to know that the slaves had not been sent away, on purpose to afford their master an excuse for visiting a most suspicious quarter?

Upon the whole, it seems to us that in this case, as in many other circumstances of Scripture history, the apparent "difficulty" disappears, or becomes greatly attenuated, when *all* the circumstances are closely weighed; and when we contemplate the subject not exclusively from our own point of view, but from that of contemporaries, under influences—religious, political, and social—very different from our own, but which some degree of careful study may enable us to realize. The more this is done, the more "digestible" many of the hardest things of Scripture history will appear. One thing is certain, that there is not a word or hint in the sacred books to show that the conduct of David and Solomon to Joab, Shimei, Adonijah, or Abiathar, was regarded as other than perfectly right and just, if not laudable, by the people of the age and country in which David and Solomon lived. Indeed, we may be sure that Solomon was too sagacious to disfigure the commencement of his reign by acts abhorrent to the public opinion of his time. And if he had that sanction—as we are sure he had—we feel that, in matters not affecting any principle of God's ancient law, we have no right to stigmatize his conduct as unjust or barbarous, although, with our keener sense—with our Christian and occidental perceptions of human obligations, we turn with relief from the grim severities of this blood-stained page. *Kit.*

It is not difficult to offer a complete justification of Solomon's action in this matter. In the first place, it is to be remembered that cruelty had no part in his character. In his long reign of forty years there are absolutely no evidences of a brutal and tyrannical disposition. There is a strong presumption, consequently, that he was not actuated by cruelty on this occasion, a presumption which finds support in the consideration that Solomon was much too sagacious to prejudice himself in popular estimation at the commencement of his reign by proceedings which would have the least suspicion of vindictiveness. And with this probability the facts

of the case entirely agree. Shimei's life, as we have seen, was forfeited to Jewish law. As he had so long been spared, however, the king gave him a gracious respite. The conditions imposed were not onerous. Shimei had but to keep his parole and he would live; to break it and he would assuredly die. He *did* break it, and broke, too, his solemn oath. The king had protested unto him that if he went any whither, he should most certainly die. When he went, when he despised the royal command and disregarded his sacred oath, how was it possible for Solomon to break his word? To do so would have been inevitably to compromise himself with his subjects, and to forfeit their reverence and trust. Besides, there was a duty he owed to his dead father, and above all, one which he owed to the living God. He had now the opportunity for which his father bade him wait, of putting into force the provisions of the Mosaic law, of requiring the death of the blasphemer, of showing his subjects that the law could not be defied with impunity, that though vengeance was not executed speedily against evil works, still retribution was certain in the long run, and so of teaching them a much-needed lesson of obedience and respect of au-

thority. Every consideration, therefore, of justice, morality, filial piety, and religion warranted him in putting Shimei to death. Every imputation of weakness, irresolution, disregard of his plighted word, compromise of his royal dignity, and indifference to religion might justly have been levelled against him, had he interfered between Shimei and the sword of Justice. *Hammond.*

In this connection it will be well to read carefully pages 481-485, respecting David's charge to Solomon with reference to Joab and Shimei. B.

45. Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established. According to God's promise (2 S. 7 : 13-16). Solomon regards the punishments which he has inflicted and is about to inflict as a fulfilment of the conditions under which the promise was made. His action is the upholding of righteousness in the kingdom. **46. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.** The conspirators who might have been dangerous were all removed, and now, though still but a youth, Solomon had gained complete hold of the reins of government. A. F. K.

Section 285.

SOLOMON'S PREPARATION FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

1 KINGS 5 : 1-18. 2 CHRONICLES 2 : 1-18.

1 K. 5 : 1 AND Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house for the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary, nor evil occurrence. And, behold, I purpose to build an house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build the house for my name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy ser-

2 Chron. 2 : 1 Now Solomon purposed to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me.* Behold, I build an house for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him incense of sweet spices, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts of the LORD our God. This is *an ordinance* forever to Israel. And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who, am I then, that I should build him an house,

vants ; and I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt say : for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto
 7 the Zidonians. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David
 8 a wise son over this great people. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have heard *the message* which thou hast sent unto me : I will do all thy desire concerning timber of
 9 cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea : and I will make them into
 10 rafts to go by sea unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be broken up there, and thou shalt receive
 11 them : and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. So Hiram gave Solomon timber of cedar and timber of
 12 fir according to all his desire. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to
 13 Hiram year by year. And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him ; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon ; and they two made a league together.
 14 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel ; and the levy was thirty thousand
 15 men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses : a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home :
 16 and Adoniram was over the levy. And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains ; besides Solomon's chief officers that were over the
 17 work, three thousand and three hundred, which bare rule over the people that wrought
 18 in the work. And the king commanded, and they hewed out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with wrought stone. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites did fashion them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house.

7 save only to burn incense before him ? Now therefore send me a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave *all manner of* gravings, *to be* with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my
 8 father did provide. Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon : for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon ; and, behold, my
 9 servants shall be with thy servants, even to prepare me timber in abundance : for the house which I am about to build shall be
 10 wonderful great. And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty
 11 thousand baths of oil. Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD loveth his people, he hath made thee king over them.
 12 Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with discretion and understanding, that should build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.
 13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's,
 14 the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson ; also to grave any manner of graving, and to devise any device : that there may be *a place* appointed unto him with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy
 15 father. Now therefore the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his ser-
 16 vants : and we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need : and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa ; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.
 17 And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them ; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thou-
 18 sand and six hundred. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

The correspondence between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre (given in 1 K. 5 ; but more fully 2 Chron. 2) sets forth, with delightful recognition of the true God, the plans of Solomon and his propositions to the king of Tyre ; the occasion for a temple ; the uses it should subserve ; and his reasons for making it supremely magnificent. "The house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? Who am I that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?" Hiram's answer has some remarkable words for an idol-worshipping king. This is said to have been sent in writing : "Because the Lord [Jehovah] hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who hath given unto David the king a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who might build an house for the Lord and an house for his kingdom." H. C.

The friendship of this monarch was of the highest value in contributing to the great royal and national work, the building of the temple. The cedar timber could only be obtained from the forests of Lebanon : the Sidonian artisans, celebrated in the Homeric poems, were the most skilful workmen in every kind of manufacture, particularly in the precious metals. Solomon entered into a regular treaty, by which he bound himself to supply the Tyrians with large quantities of corn ; receiving in return their timber, which was floated down to Joppa, and a large body of artificers. The timber was cut by his own subjects, of whom he raised a body of 30,000 ; 10,000 employed at a time, and relieving each other every month ; so that to one month of labor they had two of rest. He raised two other corps, one of 70,000 porters of burdens ; the other of 80,000 hewers of stone, who were employed in the quarries among the mountains. All these labors were thrown, not on the Israelites, but on the strangers, who, chiefly of Canaanitish descent, had been permitted to inhabit the country. *Milman.*

The various works in brass executed for the Temple (1 K. 7 : 13-45) imply a considerable advancement in art ; and we also gather that the men of Tyre were skilled as wood-carvers and stone-masons, and were bold adventurous seamen. The wood for the Temple was floated down in great rafts to Jaffa (Joppa), and thence carried up to Jerusalem ; this, of course, necessitated constant and close intercourse between the Tyrians and the Jews, and the relations at

this period between Hiram and Solomon, and their respective peoples, appear to have been very intimate. Between four and five miles from Tyre there is a remarkable monument shown as the tomb of Hiram, which consists of a huge sarcophagus twelve feet long, eight feet wide, and six feet high, hewn out of a single block of limestone, with a lid of the same material five feet thick, the whole resting on a massive platform, ten feet high, built up of three courses of large stones. There is one point of contact between the Jews and Phœnicians which should not remain unnoticed—the similarity, perhaps identity, of the language used by the two peoples, and also by the surrounding tribes : this is perhaps indicated by the absence of any mention in the Bible of the employment of interpreters by the Jews in their intercourse with the original inhabitants, and by the special mention of Egypt in Ps. 81 : 5 as being a country "where I heard a language that I understood not." The similarity between Hebrew and Phœnician was noticed by Jerome and Augustine, when the latter language was still spoken ; and there are, besides, many Phœnician and Carthaginian names which are devoid of meaning except in Hebrew. The discovery of the celebrated Moabite stone proves the use of the Phœnician language in Moab in the time of King Mesha, and a small inscription found by Monsieur Ganneau, near Jerusalem, seems to point to its use in that city during the period of the kings. *Wilson.*

The agreement between the character of the Phœnicians as drawn in Kings and Chronicles, and that which we know from other sources to have attached to them, is worthy of remark. The wealth, the enterprise, the maritime skill, and the eminence in the arts, which were the leading characteristics of the Phœnicians in Homer's time, are abundantly noted by the writers of Kings and Chronicles ; who contrast the comparative ignorance and rudeness of their own nation with the science and "cunning" of their neighbors. It has been well remarked that "we discover the greatness of Tyre in this age, not so much from its own annals as from those of the Israelites, its neighbors." The scanty fragments of the Phœnician history which alone remain to us are filled out and illustrated by the more copious records of the Jews, with a simplicity and truthfulness that we rarely meet with in profane writers. G. R.

2 Chron. 2 : 3-12. The correspondence between Hiram and Solomon is given in the Chronicles with added points we are thankful to have preserved. The correspondence is very

important and interesting. One point must not pass unnoticed. It is said that "Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,"—thus implying that the message was orally conveyed; but of Hiram's reply, it is remarked—doubtless with designed emphasis—that he "*answered in writing*"—being certainly the first recorded instance of this application of writing, in which it would seem the Phœnicians were beforehand with the Hebrews. Solomon's message was in every way creditable to him. He bore testimony to the truth he knew, apprehending that it became him to uphold the Lord's honor under all circumstances,—not wishing to displease Hiram, who was an idolater, but determined to pay no timid deference to heathen prejudices. He boldly asserted the very positions which a heathen was least of all likely to receive—the infinity of Jehovah, and his supreme dominion. "The house which I build is great; for *great* is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?" The effect of this conscientious boldness in bearing testimony to the truth was such as invariably follows the same line of conduct. Hiram was *not* displeased, but spoke reverently of this high God, and expressed his earnest desire to co-operate in so good a work. Indeed, his language is stronger than that of Solomon himself, and may suggest that this declaration had made a serious impression upon his mind, or at least had strengthened some convictions made during his former intercourse with David, in whose mind the glory of God was so active a principle of thought, speech, and action, that it seems impossible for one to have been a "lover of David," without being also, in some measure, a lover of David's God. In Hiram's answer these remarkable words occur—"Because Jehovah hath loved his people, He hath made thee king over them." And again: "Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel, *that made heaven and earth.*" Here is a clear acknowledgment of Jehovah as the creator of the universe, of his government of the world, of his providence, and that by Him kings reign. As in the case of David, what Solomon requires is assistance in art, and certain kinds of wood for building from the mountains of Lebanon. The payment was also, in like manner, to be in agricultural produce,—corn, wine, and oil. Solomon does not want, as David did, carpenters and masons; so that there can be little doubt that David had retained in his employment, on various works, the men who had previously come to him from Tyre, and these had doubtless taught others. Indeed, there was probably great activity in building,

particularly at Jerusalem, throughout the reign of David. In that city, the rapid increase of population, from its being made the metropolis of the kingdom, must have created a constant demand for new buildings.

2 Chron., verse 7. What Solomon wanted most was a master of the works, able to carry out the plans left by David; and it was for such a man that Solomon applied to Hiram. The account of the attainments required is curious, as showing the very diverse qualifications sought in one man, in an age wherein labor and skill was much less subdivided than it afterward became. The qualifications, however, had respect to the furniture of the temple, and not to the construction of it, which leaves open the question whether Solomon had otherwise provided for this part of the undertaking—say by obtaining an architect from Egypt—or that the qualifications required for this purpose are to be regarded as included among those of the skilful person sought from the king of Tyre. The latter seems probable, as the qualifications enumerated are nearly the same found in Bezaleel, who, however, not only excelled in the matters specified, but superintended the whole construction of the tabernacle. The selection of Hiram fell in this instance on a person who bore the same name with himself, and who had the advantage of being the son of a Hebrew woman of the tribe of Naphtali, though his father was a man of Tyre. What Solomon demanded was, "a man cunning (skilful) to work in gold, in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave," etc. Josephus understood that Hiram was skilful in "*all kinds of works,*" but in these particularly. And this is probable; for in the case of Bezaleel, after the enumeration of the like qualifications, it is added, that he was skilled "in all manner of workmanship." To skill in dyes, in colors, in textile fabrics, in brassfounding, in smithery, in gold and silver work, Hiram added the knowledge of "carving," probably wood-carving and modelling. *Kit.*

In profane history, Phœnician civilization is represented as consisting especially in the possession of nautical skill, of extensive commerce, and of excellence in mechanical and ornamental arts and employments. None "can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians" (1 K. 5:6). They are "cunning to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and in blue, and in crimson;" they "can skill to grave gravings." Hiram of Tyre casts for Solomon all his vessels for the Temple service, and especially the two huge pillars, Jachin and Boaz,

which stood in front of the porch, and the great laver called "the molten sea." Closely in accordance with this is the character of Phœnician civilization, which we derive from the Greeks. Their early nautical skill and extensive trade are mentioned by Homer and Herodotus, the former of whom speaks especially of their beautifully embroidered robes and their bowls of silver. Their "skill to hew timber," even at this remote time, was attested by their own historians, as also was their practice of making large metal pillars. G. R.

2 Chron., verse 8. Timber of various kinds was what Solomon chiefly required of King Hiram. That it was needful to procure timber from so distant a quarter, and that through the intervention of foreigners, shows that, although trees of various kinds, and especially such as bear fruit, may have been abundant in Palestine, such as afforded wood suited for building purposes were not much more common in the country than they are at present. The cedar of Lebanon is a widespreading tree, generally from fifty to eighty feet high, and where standing singly, often covering, with its branches, a space the diameter of which is much greater than its height. The horizontal branches, when the tree is exposed on all sides, are very large in proportion to the trunk, being often equal in bulk to the stem of the fir or the chestnut—a circumstance alluded to by the prophet Ezekiel, in his magnificent description of this noble tree (31 : 3-6). The cedar grove, which is regarded as the remnant of the forest which supplied the cedar-wood to Solomon, or rather as the principal existing site of these trees, lies far up among the higher mountains, at a spot which it takes above a day to reach from the coast at Tripoli. The grove is here found at the foot of a lofty mountain, in what may be regarded as the arena of a vast amphitheatre, shut in on all sides by high mountains, which form part of the upper ridge of Lebanon. Although it is imagined that this is the very grove from which the king obtained his cedars, there can be no question that the supply was drawn from parts of the mountain more accessible to the coast, and from which all traces of the cedar have long since disappeared.

2 Chron., verses 16-18. Since Solomon's people were not skilful to cut timber, "like the Zidonians," it was arranged that Hiram was to supply a certain number of workmen to direct the proceedings, and perform the more difficult parts of the work; for it is to be remembered, that all the timber was to be fully prepared and fitted for its final use on the spot, not only to

facilitate the work at Jerusalem, but that no labor might be wasted in the transport of the superfluous parts. So small and busy a state as that of Tyre could not, however, supply the numerous hands required for the ruder labor, such as trimming the wood and dragging it down through the defiles of the mountains to the coast. For this Solomon undertook to find laborers among the remnants of the Canaanitish tribes whom David had spared on the condition of their being liable to be called out for service on any public works that might need their aid. They were now therefore numbered, and the adult males were found to amount to 153,600. Of these 70,000 were made hewers of wood, 80,000 bearers of burdens, and 3600 overseers of the others. A levy of 30,000 Israelites was also made for this service, and there were 550 Israelites as overseers of the whole work. They were not all employed at once, but in relays of one third at a time, so that every man spent four months at home and two in the mountains. This, and the great numbers employed, must have rendered the obligation less onerous than has been represented. These arrangements were continued for several years on a well-organized plan. The wood prepared by these multitudes was taken down to the sea, there made up into large rafts, and floated down along the shore to Joppa, whereby the land-carriage was reduced to about twenty-five miles to Jerusalem. To support these laborers, and to remunerate Hiram for the aid of his people, Solomon agreed to supply the king, year by year, with 20,000 measures of wheat, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil (*verse 10*).

1 K. 5 : 17, 18. Although the operations for the procurement of timber are chiefly described, great hewn stones for the foundation of the temple were also to be procured. It is stated that "The king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers; so they prepared timber and stones to build the house." As to the descriptive epithets, we may combine them into "great costly hewn stones." The previous squaring of the stones in the quarry not only facilitated their removal to the place of building, but produced the remarkable result that the house being "built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 K. 7 : 7). The terms employed by the sacred historian will scarcely strike us in all their force, unless we

bear in mind that stones of enormous size are known to have been employed in the ancient buildings of Syria. Thus, in the sub-basement of the great temple of Baalbek, which is probably much more ancient than the now ruined Roman structure which rests upon it, there is one stone sixty-six feet in length by twelve in breadth and thickness, with others of not greatly inferior size; while in a neighboring quarry, which tradition declares to be that from which Solomon obtained his "great stones," are stones of equal and greater dimensions, cut and ready for use, one of them being no less than seventy feet in length by fourteen feet five inches in thickness. This stone, therefore, contains 14,128 cubic feet, and would, if of Portland stone, weigh no less than 1135 tons.

At Jerusalem, the immense size and obvious antiquity of much of the stone-work around the area which contains the mosque of Omar, and formerly contained the temple of the Lord, have led many to ascribe it to the age of Jewish magnificence,—some carrying it back to the time of Solomon, and others being content to refer it to the time of Herod the Great. This is found in the lower courses of masonry, and at the angles, the superstructure of the enclosing wall being of smaller and inferior masonry, comparatively modern, and doubtless of Saracenic workmanship. To these remains we incline to assign the higher antiquity, and to regard them as remains—the only remains—of the original work of Solomon. Along nearly the whole of the eastern side, upon the brow of the steep valley of Jehoshaphat, courses of ancient masonry may be traced in almost a continuous line. In some places the courses scarcely appear above the soil, while in others they rise nearly to the height of the modern walls, especially at the angles and projecting towers, which were built to a greater height with great stones, and of such firm masonry as could not easily be destroyed. The inequality may be in part accounted for by the irregularities of the ground, and the unequal accumulation of *débris*. At the northeast angle, for instance, several courses of ancient masonry form a corner tower, projecting slightly from the general face of the wall, along a length of eighty-one feet. Many of the stones here measure from seventeen to nineteen feet in length, while a few exceed twenty-four feet. They vary from three to four feet in depth, and from five to eight in width. But the southeast angle of the enclosing wall is perhaps the most imposing object in or near Jerusalem, consisting of enormous blocks of stone rising at the corner to the height of seventy feet. In the upper por-

tions, however, the stones are so irregularly interlocated as to show that they belong to the restorations from old materials; upon the basis of the more ancient lower courses. At this place, and in the wall upon each face of this corner, in the three lower courses, stones are found measuring nearly thirty feet long, and of proportionate thickness and depth; and wherever such stones occur, at this and other spots, there is always observable more regularity than is found higher up—more of uniform intention—more indication of adequate means and leisurely construction. At the western wall, about thirty-nine feet from the southwest corner, several huge stones jut out,—as if, one is apt to think at the first sight, from the bursting of the wall by an earthquake. On closer inspection, it is seen that the three courses of these immense stones retain their original places. Their external surface is hewn to a regular curve; and being fitted one upon another, form the commencement or foot of an enormous arch, which once sprung from the western wall in a direction toward Mount Zion, across the valley which separated that mount from Mount Moriah. About a hundred yards northward of the arch we come to what is called the Jews' Wailing Place, where occur some of the finest and best-preserved masonry in this wall of enclosure. It derives its name from the fact that the Jews have purchased permission to assemble here every Friday, in the precincts of these ancient stones, to recite a set form of prayers, and to bewail the ruin of "the holy and beautiful house in which their fathers worshipped." At this spot we find five courses of bevelled stones, and over them three courses of smooth-faced stones, little, if at all, inferior in size. The lower courses of the masonry are beautifully fresh and polished in surface,—others, either by time, or more probably by external injury, are much decayed. *Kit.*

2 K., verse 18. Southward from Tripoli, along the sea-coast, is Batrun (Botrys), and Jebel, the *Gebal* of the Bible, whose inhabitants were employed as stone-cutters in preparing the material for Solomon's Temple (1 K. 5 : 18), and are mentioned by Ezekiel as the "calkers" of the Tyrian ships (27 : 9). *Wilson.*—Gebal, as its ancient and extensive ruins prove, was a place of much importance, and lying as it did on the coast, and near the cedar forests, would naturally have an important share in the cutting and shipping of the timber. Indeed, it is not improbable that it was at this port that the land transport ended, and the rafts were made. A road ran anciently from Gebal to Baalbek,

so that the transport was not impracticable. But as the forests were probably of great extent, there may have been two or three depots at which the timber was floated. *Hammond.*

Relations of Tyre and Israel.

Twice in the history of Israel were its relations with the neighboring kingdom of Tyre close and intimate. Twice did the Phœnician race exercise an important influence on the Hebrew people. In the days of Solomon the subjects of Hiram furnished men and materials to build a house to the name of the Lord. The Phœnicians were not only idolaters, but they belonged to the accursed races of Canaan; yet we see them here assisting the holy people, and furthering the interests of the true religion. But in the days of Ahab these relations were reversed. Then the kingdom of Ethbaal furnished Israel with a princess who destroyed the prophets of the Lord and sought to exterminate the religion of which the temple was the shrine and centre. In the first case, that is to say, we see Israel influencing Tyre for good; we hear from the lips of the Tyrian king an acknowledgment of the goodness of the Hebrew God; we see the two races combining to bring glory to God and to diffuse the blessings of peace and civilization among men. In the second case, we see Tyre influencing Israel for evil. No longer do the skilled artificers of Sidon prepare timber and stones for the Lord's house, but the prophets and votaries of Phœnician deities would fain break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers. So far from rearing a sanctuary to Jehovah, they would root up His worship and enthrone a foul idol in the place of the Divine Presence. Such have been at different times the relations of Tyre and Sidon to the chosen race and the true religion. *Hammond.*

Confirmation by Profane Historians and by Monumental Inscriptions.

The fact of Solomon's rule over the Jews at the time which Scripture assigns to him, and the friendly relations in which he stood toward the Tyrian monarch, Hiram, were attested by the Tyrian historians, on whose works Diodorus and Menander based their histories. The Tyrian histories witnessed, moreover, to the construction of the Temple by Solomon, an event which they placed in the one hundred and forty-fourth year before the foundation of Carthage, or B.C. 1007. They stated that several letters which had passed between Hiram and Solomon were preserved in the Tyrian archives; and they

further related, as we learn from Menander, that Solomon took to wife one of Hiram's daughters. This last fact, though not distinctly mentioned in Scripture, is probably glanced at in the statement 1 K. 9 : 1.

The Jewish history of even this obscure time has been found to present points of direct agreement with the Egyptian records (scanty as they are for it), with the Phœnician annals, with the traditions of the Syrians of Damascus, and with those of the early inhabitants of Northern Africa. The Hebrew account of the time is in complete harmony with all that we otherwise know of Western Asia at the period in question, of its political condition, its civilization, its arts and sciences, its manners and customs, its inhabitants. Illustrations of these points have been furnished by the Assyrian inscriptions, the Assyrian and Persian palaces, the Phœnician coins and histories, and the earliest Greek poetry. Nor is it possible to produce from authentic history any contradiction of this or any other portion of the Hebrew records. When such a contradiction has seemed to be found, it has invariably happened that in the progress of historical inquiry, the author from whom it proceeds has lost credit, and finally come to be regarded as an utterly untrustworthy authority. Internally consistent, externally resting upon contemporary or nearly contemporary documents, and both directly and indirectly confirmed by the records of neighboring nations, the Hebrew account of this time is entitled to be received as a true and authentic history on almost every ground upon which such a claim can be rested. It was then justly and with sufficient reason that the Proto-martyr in his last speech, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in his first public preaching as an Apostle, assumed as certain the simple, literal, and historic truth of this portion of the sacred narrative. Through God's good providence, there is no break in that historic chain which binds the present with the past, the new covenant with the old, Christ with Moses, the true Israel with Abraham. G. R.

To Israel was specially entrusted the guardianship of that spiritual truth, which in the course of ages would develop in all its proportions, till finally it became the common property of the whole Gentile world. On the other hand, it was the task assigned to that world, to develop knowledge and thought so as to prepare a fitting reception for the truth, that thus it might be presented in all its aspects, and carried from land to land in a form adapted to

every nation, meeting every want and aspiration. This was symbolically indicated even in the building of Solomon's Temple. For if that Temple had been exclusively the workmanship of Jewish hands, both the materials for it and their artistic preparation would have been sadly defective, as compared with what it actually became. But it was not so ; and while in the co-operation of Gentiles with Israel in the rearing of the Temple we see a symbol of their higher union in the glorious architecture of that "spiritual house built up" of "lively stones," we also recognize the gracious Providence of God, which rendered it possible to employ in that work the best materials and the best artificers of the ancient world. A. E.

The cedar is most useful when dead. There is no timber like it. Firm in the grain, and capable of the finest polish, the tooth of no insect will touch it, and Time himself can hardly destroy it. Diffusing a perpetual fragrance through the chamber which it ceils, the worm will not corrode the book which it protects, nor the moth corrupt the garment which it guards. All but immortal itself it transfuses its amaranthine qualities to the objects around it ; and however stately in the forest, or brave on the mountain's brow, it is more serviceable in Solomon's palace, and it receives an illustrious consecration when set up as pillars in the temple, and carved into doorposts and lintels for the house of the Lord. Every Christian is useful in his life, but the goodly cedars are most useful afterward. Joseph, while he lived, saved much people alive, and his own lofty goodness was an impressive and elevating pattern to his re-

lenting and admiring brethren. But as an instance of special providence and an example of untarnished excellence amid terrible temptations, Joseph dead has spoken to more than Joseph living. The sweet singer of Israel, while he lived, taught many to handle the harp and infected not a few with his thankful adoring spirit. But David being dead yet singeth, and you can hardly name the psalm, or hymn, or spiritual song, of which the lesson was not learned from the son of Jesse. Paul, in his living day, preached many a sermon, and made many a convert to the faith of Jesus. But Paul being dead yet preacheth, and they were sermons from his sepulchre which converted Luther, and Zwingle, and most of our modern evangelists. And Luther is dead, but the Reformation lives. Calvin is dead, but his vindication of God's free and sovereign grace will never die. Knox, Melville, and Henderson are dead, but Scotland still retains a Sabbath and a Christian peasantry, a Bible in every house, and a school in every parish. Bunyan is dead, but his bright spirit still walks the earth in its "Pilgrim's Progress." Baxter is dead, but souls are still quickened by the "Saints' Rest" and the "Call to the Unconverted." Cowper is dead, but the "golden apples" are still as fresh as when newly gathered in the "silver basket" of the Olney Hymns. Eliot is dead, but the missionary enterprise is young. Henry Martyn is dead, but who can count the apostolic spirits, who, phoenix-wise, have started from his funeral pile? Howard is dead, but modern philanthropy is only commencing its career. Raikes is dead, but the Sabbath-schools go on. Wilberforce is dead, but the negro will find for ages a protector in his memory. *Hamilton.*

Section 286.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE, ITS COURTS, AND THE ENTIRE FURNITURE CONNECTED WITH ITS RITUAL WORSHIP.

1 KINGS 6 : 1-38 : 7 : 13-51. 2 CHRONICLES 3 : 1-17 ; 4 : 1-22 ; 5 : 1.

2 Chron. 3 : 1 THEN Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the* LORD appeared unto David his father, which he made ready in the place that David had appointed, in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build in the second *day* of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

1 K. 6 : 1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore
3 cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the height thereof thirty cubits. And the
porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the
breadth of the house ; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

2 Chron. 3 : 4 And the height an hundred and twenty : and he overlaid it within with
5 pure gold. And the greater house he ceiled with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold,
6 and wrought thereon palm trees and chains. And he garnished the house with precious stones
7 for beauty : and the gold was gold of Parvaim. He overlaid also the house, the beams, the
thresholds, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold ; and graved cherubim on
8 the walls. And he made the most holy house ; the length thereof, according to the breadth
of the house, was twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits : and he overlaid it
9 with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents. And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels
of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

1 K. 6 : 4, 5 And for the house he made windows of fixed lattice-work. And against the
wall of the house he built stories round about, against the walls of the house round about, both
6 of the temple and of the oracle : and he made side-chambers round about : the nethermost
story was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven
cubits broad : for on the outside he made rebatements *in the wall* of the house round about,
7 that *the beams* should not have hold in the walls of the house. And the house, when it was in
building, was built of stone made ready at the quarry : and there was neither hammer nor axe
8 nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. The door for the middle
side-chambers was in the right side of the house : and they went up by winding stairs into the
9 middle *chambers*, and out of the middle into the third. So he built the house, and finished it ;
10 and he covered the house with beams and planks of cedar. And he built the stories against
all the house, each five cubits high : and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

11, 12 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, Concerning this house which thou art
in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my com-
mandments to walk in them ; then will I establish my word with thee, which I spake unto David
13 thy father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people
Israel.

14, 15 So Solomon built the house, and finished it. And he built the walls of the house within
with boards of cedar ; from the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling, he covered
16 them on the inside with wood : and he covered the floor of the house with boards of fir. And
he built twenty cubits on the hinder part of the house with boards of cedar from the floor unto
17 the walls : he even built *them* for it within, for an oracle, even for the most holy place. And
18 the house, that is, the temple before *the oracle*, was forty cubits *long*. And there was cedar on
the house within, carved with knops and open flowers : all was cedar ; there was no stone seen.
19 And he prepared an oracle in the midst of the house within, to set there the ark of the cov-
20 enant of the LORD. And within the oracle was *a space* of twenty cubits in length, and twenty
cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof ; and he overlaid it with pure gold :
21 and he covered the altar with cedar. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold :
22 and he drew chains of gold across before the oracle ; and he overlaid it with gold. And the
whole house he overlaid with gold, until all the house was finished : also the whole altar that
23 belonged to the oracle he overlaid with gold. And in the oracle he made two cherubim of
24 olive wood, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five
cubits the other wing of the cherub : from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the utter-
25 most part of the other were ten cubits. And the other cherub was ten cubits : both the cher-
26 ubim were of one measure and one form. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and
27 so was it of the other cherub. And he set the cherubim within the inner house : and the
wings of the cherubim were stretched forth, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall,
and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall ; and their wings touched one another
28 in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

2 Chron. 3 : 14 And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen,
and wrought cherubim thereon.

1 K. 6 : 29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of
30 cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. And the floor of the house
31 he overlaid with gold, within and without. And for the entering of the oracle he made doors

32 of olive wood : the lintel *and* door posts were a fifth part of the wall. So he made two doors of olive wood ; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold ; and he spread the gold upon the cherubim, and upon the palm
33 trees. So also made he for the entering of the temple door posts of olive wood, out of a fourth
34 part of the wall ; and two doors of fir wood ; the two leaves of the one door were folding, and
35 the two leaves of the other door were folding. And he carved *thereon* cherubim and palm
36 trees and open flowers : and he overlaid them with gold fitted upon the graven work. And he built the inner court with three rows of bewn stone, and a row of cedar beams.

1 K. 7 : 13, 14 And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass ; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning, to work all works in
15 brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work. For he fashioned the two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece : and a line of twelve cubits compassed either
16 of them about. And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars : the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was
17 five cubits. There were nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars ; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other
18 chapiter. So he made the pillars ; and there were two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars : and so did he for the other
19 chapiter. And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars in the porch were of lily
20 work, four cubits. And there were chapiters above also upon the two pillars, close by the belly which was beside the network : and the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows round about
21 upon the other chapiter. And he set up the pillars at the porch of the temple : and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin : and he set up the left pillar, and called
22 the name thereof Boaz. And upon the top of the pillars was lily work : so was the work of the pillars finished.

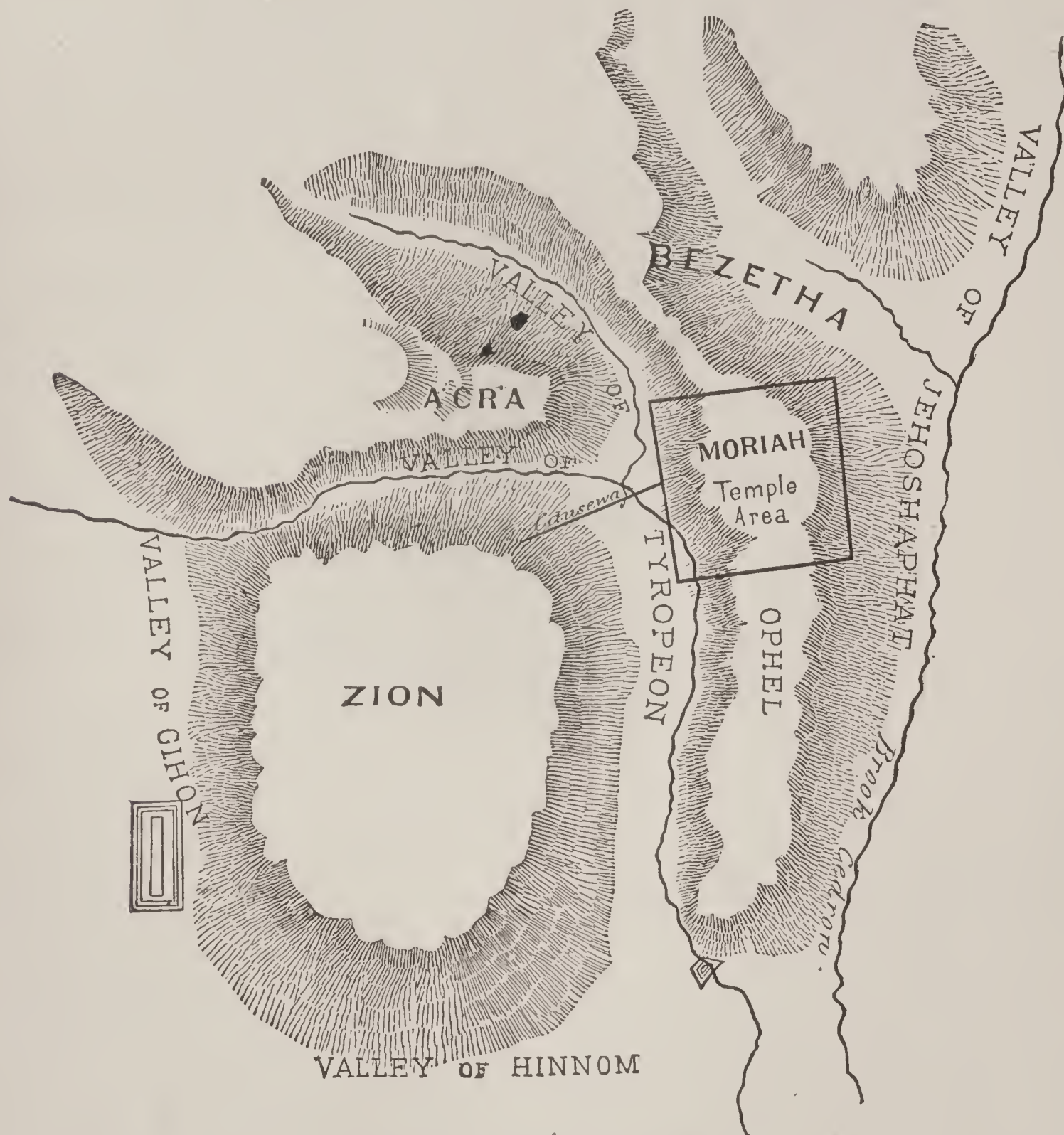
2 Chron. 4 : 1 Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

1 K. 7 : 23 And he made the molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and the height thereof was five cubits : and a line of thirty cubits compassed it round
27 about. And he made the ten bases of brass ; four cubits was the length of one base, and four
37 cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it. After this manner he made the
38 ten bases : all of them had one casting, one measure, and one form. And he made ten lavers of brass : one laver contained forty baths : and every laver was four cubits : and upon every
39 one of the ten bases one laver. And he set the bases, five on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house : and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward,
40 toward the south. And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he wrought for king Solomon in the house of the
41 LORD : the two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the pillars ; and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the pil-
42 lars ; and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks ; two rows of pomegranates
43 for each network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars ; and the
44 ten bases, and the ten lavers on the bases ; and the one sea, and the twelve oxen under the
45 sea ; and the pots, and the shovels, and the basons : even all these vessels, which Hiram made
46 for king Solomon, in the house of the LORD, were of burnished brass. In the plain of Jordan
47 did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan. And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, because they were exceeding many : the weight of the brass could
48 not be found out. And Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the LORD : the
49 golden altar, and the table whereupon the shewbread was, of gold ; and the candlesticks, five
50 on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, of pure gold ; and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, of gold ; and the cups, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the firepans, of pure gold ; and the hinges, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple, of gold.

2 Chron. 4 : 8 He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right
9 side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred basons of gold. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.

1 K. 7 : 51 Thus all the work that king Solomon wrought in the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, *even* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

1 K. 6 : 37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the 38 month Ziv. And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. [Some details omitted, vs. 24-26, 28-36.]

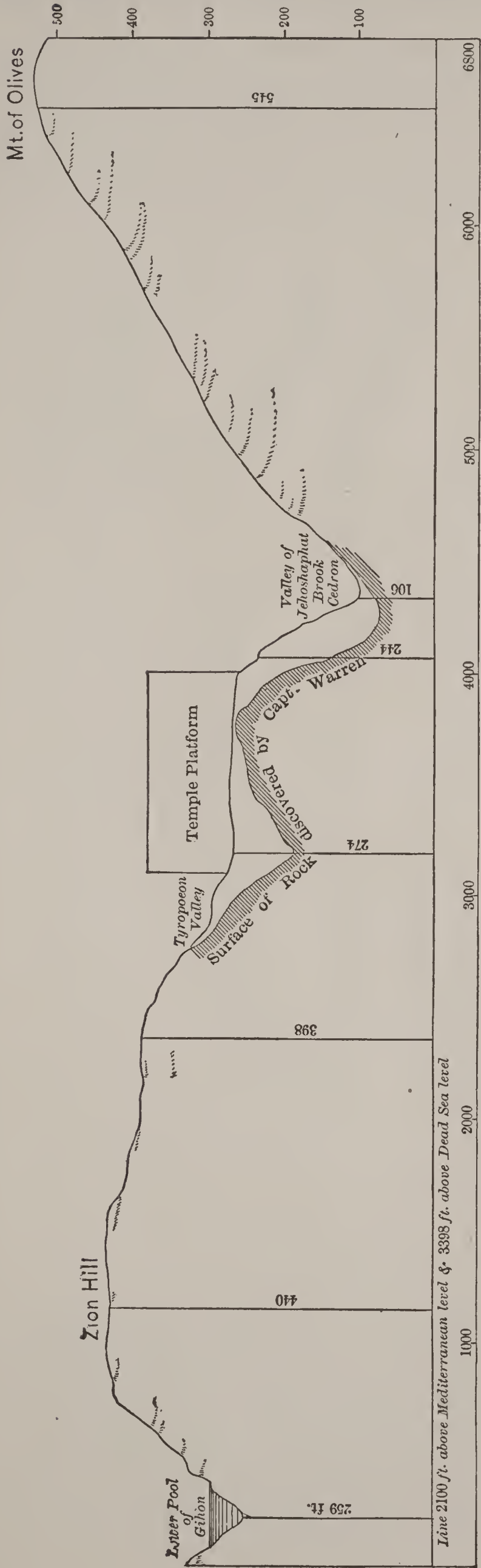


Rock Plan of Jerusalem. (Capt. Warren.)

GENERAL FEATURES OF JERUSALEM.

THE geographical position of Jerusalem may be indicated by saying that its latitude is that of the northern end of the Dead Sea, its distance from the Mediterranean thirty-one miles, and its distance from the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea fifteen miles. N. C. B.—It is exactly on the water-shed of the Mediter-

ranean and the Dead Sea, 2,650 feet above the level of the former. Built on the very backbone of the country—the summit of that long ridge which traverses the Holy Land from north to south, and only approachable by wild mountain roads—the position of the city was one of great natural strength. H. B. T.—The history of its many sieges and its capture by Titus confirm this statement. B.



PROFILE SECTION (EAST AND WEST) THROUGH JERUSALEM, TO THE HIGHEST POINT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Showing the comparative elevations of Zion, Moriah, and the Temple Platform, and the Mount of Olives; and the Rock-bed of the Brook Cedron, where the water is still flowing. (See page 512.) The breadthwise distances are indicated (also in feet) on the bottom line.

To the spectator down about the confluence of the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat is admirably revealed the elevated position of the city. From the depths of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, Moriah appears truly a mountain, and Zion the acropolis and citadel of David. N. C. B.

The great depth of the valleys on the west of Zion and the east of Moriah, the relative elevation of the northern and southern portions of the city, and the superior altitude of the Mount of Olives, will be better understood by the following statement of

COMPARATIVE HEIGHTS

of these several points above the junction of the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat:

To the summit of Moriah, 370 feet.

To the summit of Zion, 520 feet.

To the summit of the Mount of Olives, 670 feet.

To the northeast corner of city, 470 feet.

To the northwest corner of city, 570 feet. J. G. B.

THE JERUSALEM OF TO-DAY.

ONE city literally lies heaped upon another. For Jerusalem stood no fewer than twenty-seven sieges—from Jebusites and Israelites, Egyptians and Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, Mohammedans and Christians. The last and twenty-seventh siege took place in 1244 by the wild Kharezmian hordes. The Jerusalem of our day may be considered the eighth; for even before the time of David there was a city there. The second was the city of Solomon, from B. C. 1000 to B. C. 597, four hundred years; the third that of Nehemiah, three hundred years; at length came the magnificent city of Herod; then that Roman city on the ruin Titus had made; followed by the Mohammedan, and that by a Christian; and now, for six hundred years, the modern city has stood on the ruins of those that preceded it. If we examine the



South Wall, East Angle. Mount of Olives in the Distance.

rubbish and *débris*, we have to determine, at every step, among the ruins of which city we are standing—Solomon, Nehemiah, Herod, Hadrian, Constantine, Omar, Godfrey, Saladin, Suleiman, each in turn represents a city. *E. C. Gray.*

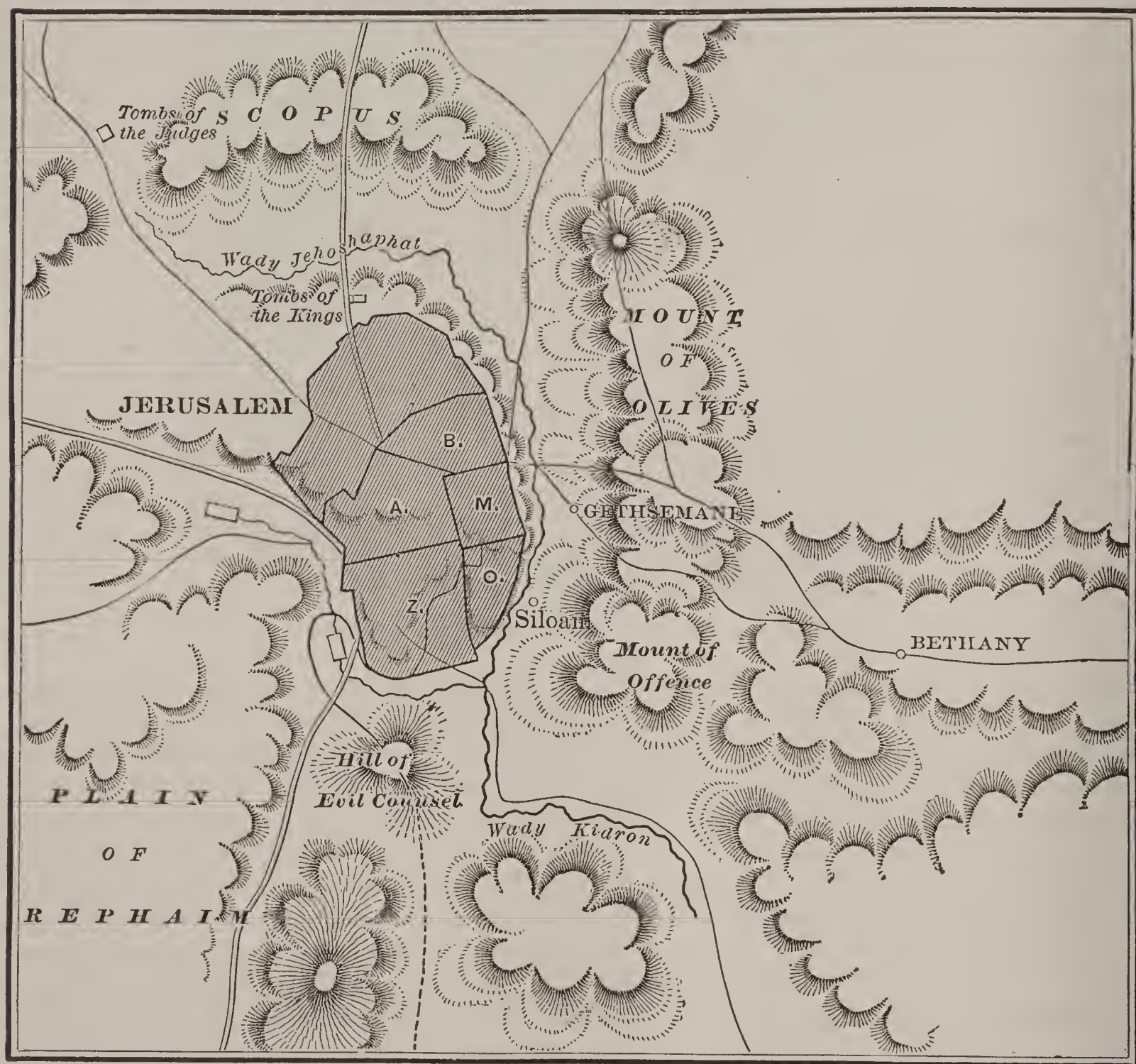
By the repeated sinking of shafts on the sloping face of Ophel, it is established that the south wall is buried for more than half its depth, and that, if bared to its foundation, this wall would present an unbroken front of solid masonry of nearly 1,000 feet long and 150 feet in height. The wall, as it now stands, with less than half that height emerging from the ground, has always been regarded as a marvel. What must it have been when entirely exposed to view, and the tall erections of the Temple towering over it! No wonder that prophets and psalmists should have rejoiced in the walls and bulwarks of the Temple, and that Tacitus should have described it as "built after the fashion of a citadel" (Ps. 48 : 13). *H. B. T.*

All these buildings, porticos, columns, pinnales, altar, and temple, have perished. The area alone remains, and the massive substructures that for 3,000 years have been sleeping in their courses. The preservation has been due to the ruin. Buildings so vast have been toppled down the slopes of the Moriah that the original defiles and valleys have been almost obliterated. What had been regarded as the original surface has been found to be *débris* from 70 to 90 feet deep. At the southwest corner of the area, *débris* has accumulated to a depth of not less than 125 feet—the accumulation of ages, made up of the ruins of successive Jerusalems; and here some of the most interesting discoveries have been made.

Here is the famous arch of Robinson. It is inferred to be the remains of a bridge which crossed the valley on arches, and connected Mount Moriah with the mountain opposite—the modern Zion. It is the skewback or abutment that slopes to receive the end of the arch.

Three courses remain. The stones are five or six feet thick, and 20 or 25 feet long. The valley here is 350 feet wide, and this must have been the length of the bridge, connecting the Temple with the royal palace on the other side. At a depth of 30 feet a worn pavement was found, worn by feet that passed over it in our Lord's time. Lying on this pavement were the voussoirs, or wedge-like stones, belonging to the arch. Breaking through this pavement, and through 24 feet of *débris* beneath, they

found a still more ancient roadway, and resting upon this, the key-stones of a still more ancient bridge. The explanation is probably reached; Robinson's arch is the remains of the bridge that was standing at the siege of Jerusalem, upon which, at the eastern end of it, stood the Roman general Titus, holding a parley with the Jews, occupying the other end of the bridge. The older bridge, the remains of which were found beneath the pavement, belonged to the palmy days of Solomon. W. I. B.



Vicinity of Jerusalem.

OUT of the valley of Jehoshaphat, or Cedron of the Bible, eastwardly rises the MOUNT OF OLIVES, three hundred feet higher than Moriah. N. C. B.—It is not so much a mount as a somewhat elevated mass, having three rounded eminences, the whole running north and south for more than a mile, on a line with the eastern wall of the city. Of these three

eminences, the central one is the Mount of Olives. The eminence on the south is called the Mount of Offence, from its being the seat of Solomon's idol-worship. From the city to the summit of Olivet, approached by three paths, the distance is about half a mile. Across the valley of Hinnom, and directly south of Zion, is the Hill of Evil Counsel. J. G. B.

The building of the temple forms a great epoch in the history of the theocracy. With it not only does the Mosaic worship gain an important accession in solidity and splendor, and the people itself a fixed central sanctuary, inasmuch as the Lord sanctions the temple on its consecration in the most solemn manner as the place chosen by him for his name; but also with it an end is first made to the provisional state of Israel in the promised land, and the Divine assurance that he will "appoint a place for his people Israel, that they might dwell in a place of their own and move no more" (2 S. 7 : 10), is completely fulfilled. The importance of this epoch is indicated by this, that the time of building is determined not only by the year of Solomon's reign, but also by the departure from Egypt. Four hundred and thirty years was Israel in Egypt (Ex. 12 : 40); four hundred and eighty years elapsed from the departure out of this land of bondage to the foundation of the temple. These two numbers form two fixed resting points for the chronology of the history of Israel in ancient times, for which the historical books of the Old Testament contain no uninterrupted era, while there is no solid ground either for shortening the four hundred and thirty years' residence of Israel in Egypt with some critics to two hundred and fifteen years, or for lengthening the four hundred and eighty years from the departure out of Egypt to the building of the temple. *Keil*. (See pp. 32, 33.)

The erection of this splendid sanctuary was no doubt the greatest event, both in Jewish and Gentile eyes, in the history of the Holy City. It made Jerusalem what it had not been till then, the religious capital. The stronghold of the Jebusites now became the shrine and centre of the Jewish system. We find a sufficient indication of the profound importance which this undertaking assumed in Jewish eyes in the fact that four chapters of our history—and three of them of considerable length—are occupied with an account of the materials, proportions, arrangements, and consecration of this great sanctuary. To the historiographers of Israel it seemed meet that every measurement of the holy and beautiful house should be recorded with the greatest exactness, while the very vessels of service, "the pots and the shovels and the basins," were judged worthy of a place in the sacred page. But these careful and detailed dimensions are not only proofs of the tender veneration with which the Jew regarded the Temple and its appointments; they are also (as Bähr has well shown) indications and expressions of the belief that this house, so "exceed-

ing magnificent," was for the Lord, and not for man. These exact measurements, these precise and symbolic numbers, all point to a place for the Divine Presence. At the same time it must be added here that, exact and detailed as is the description of this edifice, it is nevertheless so partial, and the account is, perhaps necessarily, so obscure as to leave us in considerable doubt as to what Solomon's Temple was really like. In fact, though "more has been written regarding the temple at Jerusalem than in respect to any other building in the known world" (Fergusson), the authorities are not agreed as to its broad features, while as to matters of detail they are hopelessly divided. And the difficulty is enhanced by the fact that the temple was purely Jewish, so that no information as to its structure and arrangements can be derived from the contemporary architecture of Egyptians or Assyrians. In the absence of all analogies restoration is hopeless. *Hammond*.

Site of the Temple.

Of all the buildings of the Jerusalem of the Bible, scarce a recognizable trace remains above ground outside of the Temple platform. Eleven sieges and destructions have utterly erased all that was visible of the city of the Maccabees and Nehemiah, still more of the city of the Jewish monarchy, of David and Solomon. The platform, now called Haram esh Sherif, is a vast artificial work, raising the area nearly to a level with the central rock, which we suppose to have been the site of Araunah's threshing-floor and of the altar of burnt-sacrifice in Solomon's Temple, now crowned with a magnificent dome, called the *Kubbet es Sakhra*, or Dome of the Rock. The platform is supported by stupendous walls, built up from the slope of the hill on three sides. The enclosure is oblong, measuring 926 feet on its south face and 1530 feet on its east side; the northern and western sides being respectively a little longer. It seems that Solomon's Palace originally stood at this south end of the platform, reaching about 600 feet from the east angle to the Double Gate; and that the tradition is right which calls this Triple Gate, consisting of three arches, each 25 feet high and 14 wide, the entrance to Solomon's Stables, the great vaulted crypts which extend from these underneath the platform. Herod appears to have added the western third of the wall toward the Tyropæon, and on the whole he erected the magnificent colonnade, called the Royal Portico, which ran the whole length, with its pinnacles, 150 feet high, so that the specta-

tor looked down 300 feet into the valley beneath. The Temple of Solomon would appear then to have been an oblong of over 900 feet by 600, with his palace, 600 by 300 feet, to the south of it: and a square of about 300 feet was added by Herod to complete the rectangle at the southwest, when the whole platform, including the site of the palace, was thrown into the Temple area, thus making it co-extensive with the present Haram Area. H. B. T.

The rugged top of the vast platform was levelled with immense labor; its sides, which to the east and south were precipitous, were faced with a wall of stone, built up perpendicular from the bottom of the valley, so as to appear to those who looked down of most terrific height; a work of prodigious skill and labor, as the immense stones were strongly mortised together and wedged into the rock. Around the whole area or esplanade an irregular quadrangle, was a solid wall of considerable height and strength; within this was an open court, into which the Gentiles were either from the first or subsequently admitted. A second wall encompassed another quadrangle, called the court of the Israelites. Along this wall, on the inside, ran a portico or cloister, over which were chambers for different sacred purposes. Within this again another, probably a lower, wall, separated the court of the priests from that of the Israelites. To each court the ascent was by steps, so that the platform of the inner court was on a higher level than that of the outer. *Milman.*

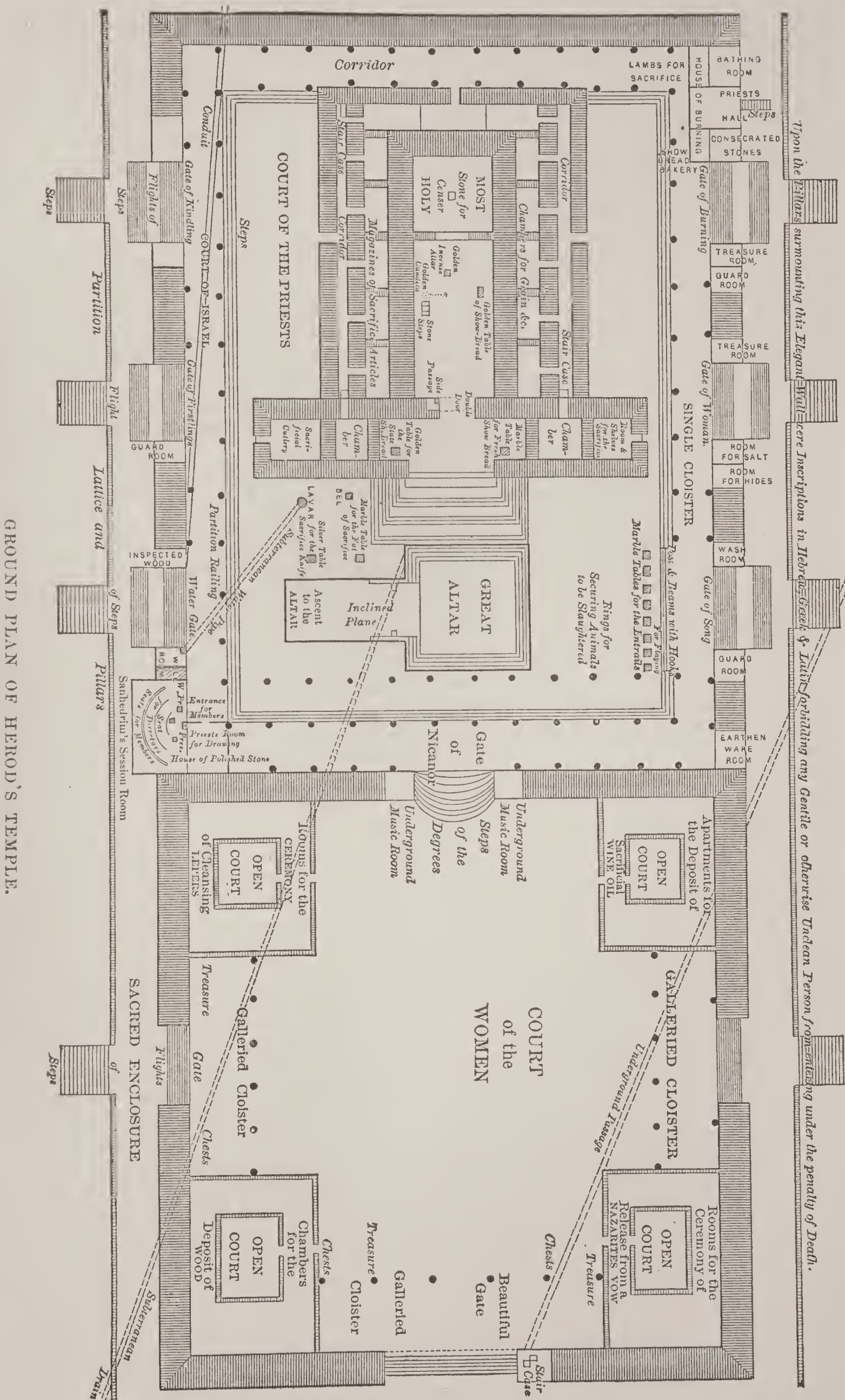
Among the works undertaken for the temple were also the drains and water-supply, matters of the highest importance in the elaborate ceremonial of the worship. The depths of Mount Moriah were pierced by Solomon's men, sometimes by shafts driven straight down or steeply sloping into the bowels of the mountain, sometimes by tunnels running from north to south not much above the level of the brook Kedron. One of these tunnels, leading from the Virgin's Fount to the Pool of Siloam, is 1708 feet long, and presents at its southern end an inscription in old Hebrew which is thought to be of the age of Solomon. The value of these shafts and tunnels and tanks was very great. By one set the blood of sacrifices, the refuse, and the filth could be at once hurried out of sight into the heart of the rock, whence drains conveyed the whole to the Kedron and the Dead Sea. By another a copious supply of water could be brought from a distance. So honeycombed is the mountain with cisterns, that one of them, known as the Great Sea, would contain two million gal-

lons, while the total storage provided probably exceeded five times that quantity. Perhaps the pools of Solomon, six miles off on the hill-sides above Bethlehem, as the three great tanks in Wadi Urtas are called, were built by the king's orders for supplying the temple-hill. Although history is silent on the point, there is not known to have been any other king who had either power or wisdom sufficient to build these vast tanks; to lay a double set of pipes as far as Jerusalem, at a high level and a low level; and to tunnel the rocks, as they are found to be, even for miles in length. *Sime.*

The general plan of the Temple was identical with that of the Tabernacle. God was the architect of both; giving "patterns" of the one to Moses in the Mount, and of the other to David by the Spirit (1 Chron. 28 : 12, 19). The House surpassed the Tent in size, being of exactly double dimensions, and in richness and permanence both of material and construction.

The locality of the sacred structure, and the time of its commencement. It was built upon the eminence of Moriah, northeastward of and somewhat lower than the hill of Zion. The ground had been purchased by David from Ornan the Jebusite, and was probably the identical place where Abraham would have offered Isaac as a sacrifice. The work of building was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, three years having been occupied in preparation. The epoch was a remarkable one, it being the central point of human history, almost midway between the creation of man and the present time.

The area, the parts, proportions, and material of the Temple and its courts. To gain needed ground for the structures and courts the original area was extended by building up walls and buttresses and filling in with earth. This necessitated the laying of deep and strong foundations for walls and buildings. The whole space enclosed by the outer walls formed an oblong of 600 feet by 900. The main building comprised four parts, of which the Temple proper included three: The Porch; the greater house or Holy Place; and the Holy of Holies. The fourth part was a three-storied appendage on either side containing chambers for the uses of the priests. The Temple proper was an oblong square 105 feet (estimating the cubit at half a yard) from east to west, and 30 feet from north to south. Of its three parts, the Porch or entrance was 15 feet in depth, the Holy Place 60 feet, and the Most Holy Place 30 feet. Each of these parts had the full breadth of the structure, or 30 feet. The height of the Holy Place was 45 feet. That of the Most Holy Place was 30 feet, so that this



inmost apartment was a perfect cube, with equal length and breadth and height. The fourth part, or remaining portion of the entire structure, consisted of three stories of chambers built against the sides, but having no communication with the Temple proper. These stories were so constructed, by the narrowing of the side walls, that the three floors and roof rested upon offsets; and thus the Temple walls were unpierced. Their entire height, too, was considerably less than that of the Temple, so as to admit of windows near the ceiling of the Holy Place from which the smoke of incense and the vapor of lamps might escape. Thus the whole structure externally resembled an ordinary-sized church, with nave and side aisles. It was distinguished, not by magnitude, but by beauty of workmanship and costliness of materials. The walls of the building were of white stone. The interior surfaces of both Holy places, sides, ceiling, and floor, were lined with cedar-wood, which was overlaid with pure gold; the side walls being enriched with chasing and with precious stones. A pair of immense folding-doors, whose golden surfaces were embossed with figures of cherubim, of foliage and flowers, formed the entrance from the porch to the Holy Place. And similar doors of smaller dimensions opened into the Holy of Holies. These doors were always open, while before the opening, and wholly concealing the inner Sanctuary, hung a richly-bordered gorgeous veil.

The Temple was placed on the westward side of the whole area, and on the same side of an inner Court, called the Court of the Priests, into which only servitors of the Temple were admitted. This Court was enclosed by a wall of cedar beams resting on a stone pediment. In it was the great sacrificial altar of brass, 30 feet square and 15 feet high, and the great circular laver, or "molten sea," 15 feet in diameter at the brim and $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, standing upon twelve brazen oxen. There were also ten smaller lavers for the washing of the burnt-offerings; the sea being used "for the priests to wash in." Outside of this inner Court, covering the remainder of the enclosed area, was the "Great Court," called also the Court of the Lord's House, for all the people. One significant fact is carefully noted respecting the whole structure. The shaping, dressing, and fitting of a great part of the material, even to the setting of pins and bolts, was done in the Phœnician quarries or work-shops, whence it was transported to Jerusalem by sea and land. Hence "there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building."

Mainly the work of ornamentation was wrought in Jerusalem.

This Temple, it may be added, was seven years in building; it remained more than four hundred years, and was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar B.C. 588. The second Temple was built under the superintendence of Zerubbabel, and completed B.C. 516. This building, having become greatly dilapidated, was almost wholly rebuilt by Herod the Great. And his magnificent structure was utterly destroyed by Titus, A.D. 70. (We reproduce the Ground-plan of Herod's Temple, and also various diagrams and statements bearing upon the topics of this and the preceding section, from New Testament, Vol. I. See pages 535-538 and 541.) B.

1 K. 6 : 5, 6, 8-10. The temple was surrounded by three *stories of chambers*, each of which stories was five cubits high, so that there remained above ample space for introducing the windows, requisite more for ventilation than for the admission of light into the sanctuary. The lowest story of the chambers was five cubits, the middle six, and the third seven cubits wide. This difference of the width arose from the circumstance that the external walls of the Temple were so thick that they were made to recede one cubit after an elevation of five feet, so that the "rebatement" (or shoulder) in the wall of the temple gave a firm support to the beams which supported the second story, without being inserted into the wall of the sanctuary; which insertion was, perhaps, avoided not merely for architectural reasons, but also because it appeared to be irreverent. The third story was supported likewise by a similar rebatement, which afforded a still wider space for the chamber of the third story. These observations will render intelligible these biblical statements. *Kit. Enc.*

1 K. 6 : 7. The historian here digresses for a moment to speak of the remarkable and, indeed, unprecedented way in which the temple was built. The stories were shaped and prepared beforehand in the quarry, so that there was nothing to do on their arrival in the temple area but to fit them into their place in the building. Where was this quarry? The general idea is that it was in the Lebanon. And it is not to be denied that the massive substructions and corner-stones of the temple may have been brought from the mountain, along with the wood; but the bulk of the stone, there can be no doubt, was found much nearer home. Some of it, according to the Mishna, came from Bethlehem; but we can hardly be mistaken in believing that for the most part it was quarried in Jerusalem

itself, under the very temple rock, and out of the vast caverns recovered some years ago by Dr. Barclay (see his "City of the Great King"), the "Royal Caverns" of Josephus. See *Quart. Journal*, Pal. Explor. Fund (No. vii.), pp. 373, 374, and cf. p. 34. There are unmistakable evidences of these extensive caverns having served as a quarry. Not only are the walls cut straight, but rude masses are left here and there to support the roof, and, what is still more convincing, there are stones more or less cut out of the rock, and incisions are made where stones are to be quarried. There was no reason why the workmen should go far afield for stone when they had it, and of very excellent quality, at their own doors. *Hammond*.

Neither hammer nor axe was heard in that holy structure. There was nothing in Sion but silence and peace. Whatever tumults are abroad, it is fit there should be all quietness and sweet concord in the Church. O God, that the axes of schism, or the hammers of furious contentions, should be heard within thy sanctuary! Thy house is not built with blows: with blows it is beaten down. Oh, knit the hearts of thy servants together "in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace;" that we may mind and speak the same things; that thou, who art the God of peace, mayest take pleasure to dwell under the quiet roof of our hearts. *Bp. H.*

The building up of the Church of God is a silent, hidden process. Outward visible agencies must be employed, but the real constructive forces are out of sight. Truth works secretly and silently in the souls of men. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Noise and show are out of harmony with the sanctity of it. Clamor and violence only hinder the work. Let us not mistake a restless, busy, fussy zeal for the externalities of Church life for true spiritual service. This is often in inverse ratio to the amount of real edification. The best machinery works with least friction and noise. The quiet, thoughtful workers, who move on steadily by the inspiration of their holy purpose, without much public recognition, may after all be the most efficient builders of the temple of God. *Waite*.

He may accomplish most whose useful results no man sees, who makes no noise, who resembles the silent forces of nature, and not he who will have everything finished up by a certain time or else consider nothing to be effected. The calmness and patience, the calculation on the distant future, the noiselessness, the unweariedness, which contribute largely to the success of some men's labors, are qualities in

which contemplation schools the mind. The thoughtful Christian will, as far as in him lies, construct a solid, durable, substantial edifice, or nothing at all. *T. D. Woolsey*.

1 K. 6: 11-13. *God's promise to Solomon and to the people of Israel.* At this point the historian interrupts his description of the building to record the gracious promise made to the king during its erection. *Hammond*.—This word of the Lord Solomon received during the building of the temple. The Lord assures him that he will fulfil the promise made to David (2 S. 7) in regard to the building of the temple on condition that he will walk in his statutes, judgments, and commandments, which are enumerated in the law of Moses. This "word of the Lord" is a short Divine confirmation of that which his father David had impressed upon him in the transference of the kingdom with special reference to the building of the temple. *Keil*.

—While these protracted works were progressing, the Lord in His mercy gave special encouragement alike to Solomon and to the people. The word of the Lord, which on this occasion came to the king no doubt through a prophet, not only fully confirmed the promise made to David, but also connected the "house" that was being built to the Lord with the ancient promise (Ex. 25: 8; 29: 45) that God would dwell in Israel as among His people. Thus it pointed king and people beyond that outward building which, rising in such magnificence, might have excited only national pride, to its spiritual meaning, and to the conditions under which alone it would fulfil its great purpose. *A. E.*

God told Solomon, by the mouth of his prophet, that, notwithstanding the great splendor and magnificence wherewith he intended to adorn this temple, it was, in itself, but a mere external thing; and that the Divine presence in it, and God's acceptance of, and favor and protection bestowed upon its worshippers, should wholly depend upon the measures of their obedience to his Divine laws, agreeably to the conditional promise made to his father David. *Pyle*.—The temple was intended to be a solid and permanent dwelling-place for God in the midst of Israel, as distinguished from the frail and movable tent in which he had heretofore dwelt among them. If Solomon was faithful to God's service, and, as is implied, if Israel was faithful likewise, the reality should correspond with the symbol. God's dwelling in Israel should be as fixed and stable as this massive structure promised to be. *W. H. G.*—This was but the repetition of the ancient promise to

Moses. And what are all these promises, with all the marvellous manifestations that verified them, but typical foreshadowings of the richer grace by virtue of which the Church becomes "the habitation of God through the Spirit"? "The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands;" His dwelling-place is the fellowship of redeemed souls. *Waite.*

19-28. The Holy of Holies ("oracle"), or inner sanctuary, was divided from the rest of the temple by a partition of cedar, in the centre of which was a pair of folding-doors of olive wood, very richly carved with palm-trees, and open flowers, and cherubim,—the whole overlaid with gold. A like pair of folding-doors, of grander dimensions, also overlaid with gold, embossed in rich patterns of cherubim, and knops, and open flowers, formed the outer entrance. The door forming the entrance to the most Holy Place was left open, and the space covered, as is usual in the East, by a magnificent veil or curtain. *Kit.*

In the Holy of Holies were stood two colossal four winged cherubim of gold, facing each other, the twain inner wings of each meeting above the ark, and the twain outer wings of each reaching to the wall on either side. Curtained by the heavy, gorgeous veil (2 Chron. 3 : 14), this inner sanctuary, with its ark and cherubim, afterward its central refulgent glory symbolizing God's personal presence, was utterly closed against the vision even of the priests, save of the High-Priest on the great day of Atonement. *B.*

Solomon not only preserved the original cherubim upon the ark, but the most holy place in the temple being much larger than the corresponding portion of the tabernacle, he made two colossal cherubim, which were placed, one on each side of the ark, with expanded wings, so that two wings touched each other over the ark, while the other two reached the opposite walls. Besides this, the figures of cherubim were multiplied in the golden enchasements which lined the temple. Not only so, but there were images of oxen supporting the brazen sea, and figures of lions designed upon the bases of the ten lavers in the court of the temple; while there were within, among the interior adornments of the fretted gold, figures of palm-trees, lilies, and pomegranates. *Kit.*

1 K. 7 : 15-22. *The Pillars before the House.* The relative place and the uses of these lofty brazen shafts, with their rich capitals wreathed with adorning festoons, are not accurately determined. They seem to have been ornaments of the porch, which itself merely served as a fitting vestibule to the Temple. We may trace

a significance in the names of these pillars, "Firmness" and "Stability," as applying to the entering into God's Spiritual House, since all that enter there are forever established in His strong and enduring Dwelling-place. *B.*—The meaning of the pillars evidently is, that God has here established His temple on a firm foundation, and that it is, therefore, to be no longer a travelling sanctuary like the tabernacle. It is just because Jehovah no longer dwells in a moving tent, but in a settled house, that the cherubim stand in the temple upon the floor of the Holy of Holies, and make the whole place the constant abode of the Divine presence. *O.*—Their significancy is intimated in the names given them (verse 21), *Jachin*—*He will establish*; and *Boaz*—*In him is strength*. Spiritual strength and stability are to be had at the door of God's temple, where we must wait for the gifts of grace, in the use of the means of grace. It was a memorandum to them of the strength and establishment of the temple of God among them. Let them keep close to God and duty, and they should never lose their dignities and privileges, but the grant should be confirmed and perpetuated to them. The Gospel church God will establish, and he will strengthen. *H.*

No features in Solomon's temple have given rise to so much controversy as these two famous pillars; the beauty of which Jewish writers are never tired of recounting. They were marvels of the glyptic skill for which the Phœnician workmen were distinguished. That these were symbolic is evident from their names, which may be rendered, "Stability" and "Strength." The reference is not so much to the material building, but to the kingdom of God in Israel, which was embodied in the temple. They pointed then, and now, to the beauty and strength of the dwelling of God. The lilies and pomegranates adorning the pillars not only showed that there should be beauty in the worship of God, and that the noblest art should be consecrated to Him, but symbolized the truth declared in Ps. 96 : 6, "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." Strength needs beauty to adorn it. Beauty needs strength to support it. Emblems of stability and strength, yet exquisite in their beauty, let Jachin and Boaz, in the porch of the temple, remind us of what God would see in the Christian Church and in the Christian character. *Rowland.*

2 Chron. 4 : 1. The altar of burnt-offering appears to have undergone changes in its history. That of the tabernacle, in material, size, and the provision made for approaching it, differed considerably from this one. *E. C. B.*

1 K. 7 : 27-40. Besides the great "molten sea" (verses 23-26), there were ten bases, or stands, of brass, on which were put ten lavers, to be filled with water for the service of the temple, because there would not be room at the molten sea for all that had occasion to wash there. The bases on which the lavers were fixed are very largely described here. They were curiously adorned, and set upon wheels, that the lavers might be removed as there was occasion; but, ordinarily, they stood in two rows, five on one side of the court and five on the other (verse 39). Each laver contained forty baths—that is, about ten barrels (verse 38). They must be very *clean that bear the vessels of the Lord*. Spiritual priests and spiritual sacrifices must be washed in the laver of Christ's blood, and of regeneration. We must wash often, for we daily contract pollution; cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts. Plentiful provision is made for our cleansing; so that if we have our lot forever among the unclean, it will be our own fault. H.

48, 49. The outer sanctuary, where the priests ministered daily, contained the altar of incense, ten golden candlesticks, and ten tables, all richly wrought and overlaid. Thus it will be seen that, in the size and the number of the sacred utensils, as well as in the dimensions of the building and its parts, the Temple greatly surpassed the Tabernacle. B.

49. The number of candlesticks was multiplied to ten in Solomon's temple; and they seem to have remained at that number until carried away by the Babylonian conquerors (Jer. 52 : 19). E. C. B.—Whether all these lamps were fully lit up on great occasions is now unknown. But seventy lights in all—for there were seven bowls for olive oil in each lamp—would have filled the golden house with unmatched brilliance. *Sime.*

2 Chron. 4 : 8. Besides the table of shewbread, which was the only table in the tabernacle, there were here ten golden tables, besides others of silver, on which were laid out above a hundred golden vases of various patterns, with the different utensils—the censers, spoons, snuffers, etc.—all of gold, used in the service of the temple. *Kit.*

1 K. 6 : 38. So was he seven years in building it. As Bul was the eighth month, and Zif the second, the house was precisely seven and a half years in building—a short period, if we consider the magnitude of the undertaking, but long enough, if we remember the enormous number of hands employed upon it, the preparations made by David, and

the modest dimensions of the edifice. *Hammond.*

The temple itself was rather a monument of the wealth than the architectural skill and science of the people. It was a wonder of the world, from the splendor of its materials more than the grace, boldness, or majesty of its height and dimensions. It had neither the colossal magnitude of the Egyptian, the simple dignity and perfect proportional harmony of the Grecian, nor perhaps the fantastic grace and lightness of modern Oriental architecture. If the dimensions of the temple appear by no means imposing, it must be remembered that but a small part of the religious ceremonies took place within the walls. The Holy of Holies was entered only once a year, and that by the High-Priest alone. It was the secret and unapproachable shrine of the Divinity. The Holy Place, the body of the temple, admitted only the officiating priests. The open courts, called in popular language the temple, or rather the inner quadrangle, was in fact the great place of Divine worship. Here, under the open air, were celebrated the great public and national rites, the processions, the offerings, the sacrifices; here stood the great tank for ablution, and the high altar for burnt-offerings. But the costliness of the materials, the richness and variety of the details, amply compensated for the moderate dimensions of the building. It was such a sacred edifice as a traveller might have expected to find in El Dorado. The walls were of hewn stone, faced within with cedar which was richly carved with knops and flowers; the ceiling was of fir-tree. But in every part gold was lavished with the utmost profusion; within and without, the floor, the walls, the ceiling, in short, the whole house is described as overlaid with gold. The finest and purest—that of Parvaim, by some supposed to be Ceylon—was reserved for the sanctuary. Here the cherubim, which stood upon the covering of the ark, with their wings touching each wall, were entirely covered with gold. The sumptuous veil, of the richest materials and brightest colors, which divided the Holy of Holies from the holy place, was suspended on chains of gold. Cherubim, palm trees and flowers, the favorite ornaments, everywhere, covered with gilding, were wrought in almost all parts. The altar within the temple, and the table of shewbread, were likewise covered with the same precious metal. All the vessels, the ten candlesticks, five hundred basins, and all the rest of the sacrificial and other utensils, were of solid gold. *Milman.*

Everything connected with the building of

this great temple was thus on a scale of exceeding magnificence. With unstinting hand, labor was bestowed on the costliest stones, the rarest woods, the most curious designs, the most precious oils and spices, the boldest engineering. From far and near came tribute and trade profits to be lavished on the lordly building. Of one thing, however, not a word is said. Egypt and Babylon and Northern Syria had seen grand public buildings for religious or royal use before Solomon's reign. But the builders did not scruple to inscribe on them long stories of their costly outlay, their piety, and their hopes. Or they erected pillars, on which were engraved boastful accounts of their greatness in peace and in war. Even on the great mosque built on the temple hill, and on that at Hebron, which is supposed to cover the Cave of Machpelah, inscriptions are found in abundance. But nothing of this boastfulness was allowed in the tem-

ple of Jerusalem. There were carvings of animals and flowers on the wood ; there was no writing on the great, smooth stones. The silence of the historian on this head is most expressive. What the kings of other lands did in writing their names and greatness on the temples which they built, Solomon seems never to have thought of. He and his people were a book-writing, not a stone-writing people. " Memorial stones " appear at the beginning of Israel's history as a nation, engraven with the names of the tribes. But the great stones of the temple were not memorial stones, and bore no inscription. A place so holy allowed no praise of man to be written on its walls, and no carvings of priests, or symbols, or ceremonies, such as the temple faces of other nations show to illustrate their faith, even when their books are silent. *Sime.*

Section 287.

THE GREAT ASSEMBLY CONVOKED. THE ARK BROUGHT FROM DAVID'S TENT. SACRIFICES OFFERED. THE ARK PLACED IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. CONSECRATION OF THE TEMPLE BY THE GLORY CLOUD. ITS DEDICATION BY SOLOMON. HIS ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

1 KINGS 8 : 1-21. 2 CHRONICLES 5 : 2-14 ; 6 : 1-11.

1 K. 8 : 1 THEN Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent ; even these did the priests and the Levites bring up. And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle ; but they were not seen without : and there they are, unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

2 Chron. 5 : 11 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place (for all the priests that were present had sanctified themselves, and did not keep their courses ; also the Levites which were the singers, all of them, even Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and their brethren, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with

13 trumpets) : it came even to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD ; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For he is good ; for his mercy *endureth* for ever : that then the house was filled with a cloud, even 14 the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

2 Chron. 6 : 1 Then spake Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the 2 thick darkness. But I have built thee an house of habitation, and a place for thee to dwell in 3 forever. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the congregation of Israel : and all the 4 congregation of Israel stood. And he said, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, which 5 spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hands fulfilled it, saying, Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there ; neither chose I any man 6 to be prince over my people Israel : but I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be 7 there ; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel. Now it was in the heart of David 8 my father to build an house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. But the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst 9 well that it was in thine heart : nevertheless thou shalt not build the house ; but thy son that 10 shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name. And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake ; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the 11 LORD, the God of Israel. And there have I set the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Eleven months after its completion, the formal dedication of the Temple took place. The delay gave time for thought and impression concerning its purpose, and so aided the fitting preparation for an occasion so intensely solemn, instructive, and joyful. According to Usher, this was the ninth Jubilee, or period of fifty years, opening the fourth thousand of the years since man's creation, or A.M. 3001. The festival of Dedication continued seven days, and occurred in late October, just before the feast of tabernacles. The elders, heads of tribes, and chiefs of families, were specially summoned by Solomon to take part with him, as representatives of the people. And an immense multitude of the congregation of Israel also joined in the service. The transaction is preceded and closed by the offering of sacrifices.

This transaction (as recorded in the eighth chapter of 1 Kings) falls into three acts. The solemn removal of the ark and the other furniture of the old sanctuary into the newly-built temple forms the first act (verses 1-21). The noble prayer of Solomon, that the Lord would connect with the temple the fulfilment of all the promises made to his people, and thereby make it the true place of the revelation of his covenant grace and truth, forms the second (verses 22-61). The act of offering makes the third, which is described in verses 62-66. The first of these three acts [included in the present section] contains two elements : the transfer of the ark into the holy of holies, and of the old sanctuary

and its furniture into the new temple ; and the words in which Solomon celebrated the entrance of the Lord into the new temple. *Keil.*

A profound religious interest gathers about the scenes of the dedication of this temple. Both our authors (*i.e.*, of Kings and of Chronicles) give the details of this service, and with little variation and in very considerable fulness, narrating the sacrifices that preceded and that followed ; the introductory address of Solomon to the assembled people (1 K. 8 : 12-21), and then the consecrating prayer (verses 22-53), and the closing benediction upon the people (verses 54-61). The service must have been in the highest degree impressive and sublime. Every word seems to be perfect in adaptation to the great purpose and the grand occasion. *H. C.*

The temple and its courts being completed, the solemn dedication took place, with the greatest magnificence which the king and the nation could display. All the chieftains of the different tribes, and all of every order who could be brought together, assembled. David had already organized the priesthood and the Levites ; assigned to the 38,000 of the latter tribe, each his particular office. Twenty-four thousand were appointed for the common duties, 6000 as officers, 4000 as guards and porters, 4000 as singers and musicians. On this great occasion, the dedication of the temple, all the tribe of Levi, without regard to their courses, the whole priestly order of every class, attended. Around the great brazen altar, which rose in the court

of the priests before the door of the temple, stood—in front the sacrificers, all around the whole choir, arrayed in white linen. One hundred and twenty of these were trumpeters, the rest had cymbals, harps, and psalteries. Solomon himself took his place on an elevated scaffold, or raised throne of brass. The whole assembled nation crowded the spacious courts beyond. The ceremony began with the preparation of burnt-offerings, so numerous that they could not be counted. At an appointed signal commenced the more important part of the scene, the removal of the ark, the installation of the God of Israel in his new and appropriate dwelling, to the sound of all the voices and all the instruments, chanting some of those splendid odes, the 47th, 97th, 98th, and 107th Psalms. The ark advanced, borne by the Levites, to the open portals of the temple. It can scarcely be doubted that the 24th Psalm, even if composed before, was adopted and used on this occasion. *Mihman.*

The temple courts could not have contained a tithe of the crowds who claimed admittance. Then, as in previous ages, representatives of the people stood for the whole nation. But the higher slopes of Olivet, only five or eight hundred yards off, furnished room for many myriads to see and almost to hear the grand proceedings as distinctly as the spectators in the courts. The whole congregation, crowning the hill-top in dense masses, looked down on king, priests, nobles, and Levites. Moriah thus became a stage, and Olivet a most magnificent amphitheatre for one of the grandest displays known in the history of mankind. *Sime.*

The dedication of Solomon's Temple was the grandest ceremony ever performed under the Mosaic dispensation; for the giving of the law from Sinai was too solemn to be called a ceremony. Solomon appeared in that priestly character, which we have seen borne by his father, to perform this great act on behalf of the people, leaving to the priests and Levites the care of the ark and the details of the service, especially the psalmody. The time chosen was the most joyous festival of the Jews, the Feast of Tabernacles, in the seventh month (Tisri or Ethanim = September and October) of the sacred year. Having done the labors of the field, and gathered in the vintage, the people assembled at Jerusalem from all parts of Solomon's wide territories. The full body of the priests attended, the usual courses being suspended, and they brought the ark in a grand and joyous procession from the city of David to the rest prepared for it in the Holy of Holies. There

they placed it beneath the spreading wings of the cherubim, and drew out the ends of the staves, that they might be seen as in the Tabernacle, behind the veil. Amid all the new splendors of its dwelling, the ark of the covenant was the same as of old; it contained nothing but the two tables of the law, which Moses had placed in it at Sinai. As the priests retired from within the veil, the Levites and their sons, arranged in their three courses of psalmody, with all instruments of music, and clad in white linen robes, burst forth with the sacred chorus praising Jehovah, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." It was at this very moment, "just as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah," that He gave the sign of His coming to take possession of His house: "The house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah." As that sacred cloud spread through the open doors over the sanctuary, the voice of Solomon was heard recognizing the presence of the God who had said that he would dwell in the thick darkness, and for whom he had now built a habitation forever. Then turning to the people from the great platform of brass, which he had erected in the midst of the court, in front of the brazen altar, the king blessed Jehovah the God of Israel, who had chosen Jerusalem as the place sacred to His name, and had performed His promises to David and fulfilled his desire to build him a house. *P. S.*

1 K. 8 : 1-9. *The transfer of the ark into its place in the Holy of Holies.* They brought the ark from David's tent on Mount Zion. It is also added, that the priests and Levites brought up the old Tabernacle, with its holy vessels, from Gibeon. Before removing the ark, an immense sacrifice was offered before it in behalf of king and people. Then in solemn and glad procession, led by the king and followed by princes and people, the sacred symbol was reverently borne by the priests to the Temple. Entering the sacred courts, the king took his position upon an elevated brazen scaffold in the midst of the throng, while the priests bore the ark into the most holy place, and deposited it beneath the inner wings of the cherubim, in "the place of its rest." Then, as a sign that it was no more to go out, they drew forth the staves or handles on which they had borne it to and fro; leaving the ends protruding through the veil, in token that its long wanderings was over. The

sacred furniture of the Holy Place, including the incense-altar, the tables, the candlesticks, and censers, were also set in their appointed position. B.

The temple, though richly beautified, while without the ark was like a body without a soul, or a candlestick without a candle, or (to speak more properly) a house without an inhabitant. All the cost and pains bestowed on this stately structure are lost, if God do not accept them ; and unless he please to own it as the place where he will record his name, it is, after all, but a ruinous heap ; when therefore *all the work* is ended, the *one thing needful* is yet behind, and that is, the bringing in of the ark. This is the end which must crown the work, and which here we have an account of the doing of with great solemnity. Solomon presides in this service, as David did in the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem. H.

All the meaning and impressiveness of the dedication centred in the removal of the ark. "The elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, assembled unto King Solomon in Jerusalem," not to gaze upon and admire or even worship in the superb structure that he had reared, but "that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion." Before this ark on its sacred passage to its new abode "King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be told nor numbered for multitude" (verse 5). This ark, the symbol and pledge of the Divine presence, contained "the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt" (verse 9). And when this ark had been set in its proper place, "the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud ; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (verses 10, 11), as it had previously filled the tabernacle of Moses on its erection.

No new ark was made to take the place of the old. This was impossible. Another chest might have been made of the same pattern and dimensions, and it could have been similarly overlaid with gold. Like figures of golden cherubim could have been set above it. It might have been exactly reproduced in material and form ; but this newly-framed model would not have been the ark. It not only would have lacked the antiquity, the Mosaic origin, the venerated associations, but it would have been ab-

solutely divested of that which gave the Ark its real significance and value, the identical tables of the law engraved by God's own finger, and the ineffable presence of God himself which ever attended it. Hence, while Solomon built his temple after an enlarged pattern of the tabernacle, reproducing its sacred apartments and furniture on a grander scale, with new altars and lavers and candlesticks and table of shew-bread and figures of cherubim, the Ark remained the same. There was but this one ark, absolutely unique, throughout the whole of Israel's history from the time of their encampment at Sinai until its final destruction in the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. Without this Ark, there could, in the strict Mosaic sense of the term, be no sanctuary, no house of God, where he actually dwelt in the midst of his people, and met with them. The unity of the Ark necessarily carried with it the unity of the sanctuary. It was with this one hallowed article alone that the presence of Jehovah was indissolubly bound. All the allegations that there were numerous sanctuaries in Israel which were held to be equally legitimate until the reign of King Josiah, under whom the law of a single central sanctuary was for the first time enacted and enforced, are proved to be futile by this one undeniable fact. There was but the one material symbol with which Jehovah's presence was believed to be constantly associated by his own appointment. This was the Ark. No spot and no building but that which contained the Ark was reckoned the dwelling-place of God. He might on extraordinary occasions manifest himself elsewhere. In the absence of a legitimate sanctuary, he might be invoked and worshipped elsewhere. But the existence of one, and only one, house of God, is a necessary corollary from the existence of but one ark of God ; and if the Ark was Mosaic, which cannot be intelligently disputed, so must the law of the unity of the sanctuary be. This law may have been temporarily in abeyance, and it may have been sinfully disregarded, but the antiquity of the law and its Mosaic origin is by this single fact triumphantly established. W. H. G.

1 K. 8 : 4. The tabernacle of Moses, for a long time at Gibeon, was now taken down, that the temple might be made from henceforth the centre of worship, as "the place" that God had chosen. B.—The Tabernacle of the wilderness hereafter disappears from history ; the new Temple became the centre of the religious life of the nation. Jehovah by oracles declared that this was His rest, and that the seed of David

would be established on the throne, though the promise was conditioned on their obedience. Thus upward of four hundred years after his death the prediction of Moses was fulfilled. It was the consequence of the essential work that had been accomplished, the establishment of the nation in Canaan. It was an expression of the union of Israel, of its worship of Jehovah. *Robson.*

9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone. Nothing else was ever in the ark, the articles mentioned (Heb. 9 : 4) being not *in*, but *by* it, being laid in the most holy place before the testimony (Ex. 16 : 33 ; Nu. 17 : 10). *Jamieson.* — These venerable fragments of the rock of Sinai, seen then, were seen, as far as we know, for the last time. They must have perished, or at least disappeared, when the Ark itself perished or disappeared in the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. But their contents have survived the wreck, not only of the Ark and Temple, but of the whole system of worship, of which they were the basis. The Ten Commandments delivered on Mount Sinai have become embedded in the heart of the religion which has succeeded. *Stanley.*

If anything whatever is certainly known of the Mosaic age, it is indubitably established that the Mosaic Ark contained tables of stone on which were engraved the Ten Commandments. These were treasured in the most sacred apartment of the Sanctuary. They formed the basis of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel. They were the fundamental law of the commonwealth of Israel, by which all further enactments were regulated, and to which they were supplementary. They were believed to have emanated directly and even verbally from Jehovah Himself, and to have been by Him recorded in stone to indicate their perpetual, binding force. This sacred Ark, with its precious contents, was safely guarded until the time of Solomon, when it was transferred to the Temple. It is still spoken of in the time of Jeremiah (3 : 16), and the covenant on stone, which it contained, was only to be superseded by the law written on the heart (31 : 32, 33). Under these circumstances it is impossible that these commandments should not have been carefully and accurately preserved and transmitted. *W. H. G.*

Now all had been done that king and priests could do. Complete and beautiful stood the Temple. Complete and beautiful in its place within the veil rested the ark with the two stone tables of the Law within, and the outspread wings of the cherubim above. But while the

Temple and oracle awaited its Inhabitant, king and priest and people lifted up their voice, in unison with many instruments of music, and joined in praising and thanking the Lord. Then in sight of all occurred

2 Chron. 5 : 11-14. *The solemn consecration or taking possession of His House by Jehovah.* Even as they sung : *For He is good ; for His mercy endureth forever !* “ Then the house was filled with a cloud,” “ for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.” The whole congregation saw the cloud descend and enter the Temple. And the ministering priests within saw it rest above the mercy-seat covering the ark and ascend between the cherubim. There it brightened into a shining light of such concentrated glow and lustre that they were constrained to retire from the holy place. This was the symbol of God’s manifest personal presence. By this presence the Temple now, as the Tabernacle before, was consecrated.

Not only from the time of Israel’s wanderings, when the same symbol appeared *above* as well as within the Tabernacle, and was extended over the journeying and camping host as a pillar of cloud and fire, but throughout the Old Testament this lighted cloud appears as the visible token of the Divine presence. And John tells us (12 : 41) that Isaiah (6) directly associates this symbol as seen in the Temple with Christ, thus distinctly affirming that *He* is the Jehovah of Adam, of Abraham, of Moses, and of Israel. In harmony with this are the transcendent spectacles of the Transfiguration and the Ascension, in which this ancient symbol reappears. And in further confirmation of the whole this is the symbol, with the same beholding adoring cherubim or living creatures, wherewith the apocalyptic vision discloses the “ Son of Man,” the “ Lamb that was slain,” as the centre and source of all glory, dominion, and blessedness in heaven.

This, then, is the meaning of the cloud-enfolding glory which rested between the cherubim in the first Temple. It was God, Jehovah Jesus, enthroned in light upon the mercy-seat beneath which was the Law, together testifying of grace and of judgment, *God dwelling among His people !* Other purposes were here fulfilled : to put fresh honor upon the long-forsaken and oft-exposed ark, to reinculcate just reverence for the law it enshrined, and awaken new trust and joy in its inviting mercy-seat ; and to signify His acceptance of their work and House. But the chief purpose, let it be emphasized, was to intimate His fixed abiding presence thenceforth — His ever-active protection, guidance, and care

over His people ; that so the nation and its individual members might be effectually recalled and *re-bound* to Himself and His service. B.

13. When the singers and musicians praised God, then the house was filled with a cloud. This is very observable ; it was not when they offered sacrifices, but when they sang the praises of God, that God gave them this token of favor. It was when they were, in their praises, celebrating the everlasting mercy and goodness of God. As there is no one saying oftener repeated in Scripture than this, *His mercy endureth forever* (twenty-six times in one psalm, Ps. 136, and oftener elsewhere), so there is none more signally owned from heaven ; for it was when the priests were singing this plain song, *He is good, and his mercy endureth forever*. This should endear those words to us. God's goodness is his glory, and he is pleased when we give him the glory of it. H.—The praise of God is the choicest sacrifice and worship under a dispensation of redeeming grace : it is the prime and eternal part of worship under the Gospel. Charnock.

It is not poetry simply, it is the plain sober truth, that a whole assembly praising God is "like a little heaven below." A congregation of human hearts, agreeing together to sing forth their living human affections to the One object of their love, is always "the house of God and the gate of heaven." Such a congregation powerfully attracts heaven to itself, as like to like. With a Diviner love, and greater unity in the Church, it might easily occur again that the joy would be too great, the glory too great, and the God of glory too fully present, for the ordinary service. Even as a flood carries away all signposts and barriers before it, and sweeps over all distinction of path and hedge, so would an unusual descent of the joy of God into His Church set at naught and suspend the mechanical order of the service, and bear away priest and people on the tide of one resistless impulse to praise and glorify God. Or the Presence might be too overwhelming, utterance might be choked, and priest and people might have to wait in awe and silence for the passing over, or the withdrawal of the tide of glory. So it happened in the Hebrew Temple. "It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord ; and when they lifted up their voice with their trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying—For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever ; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord ; so that the

priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud ; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." Make the Church full of praise, and it will also be full of God. God and His praise cannot be apart. "O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel !" Pulsford.

Then the house was filled with a cloud. The Lord's acceptance of Solomon's temple, and of the dedication which he was now about to make of it, was shown, first, by "the glory of the Lord" filling the house, or inner temple, as here related ; and, second, by the fire of the Lord coming down from heaven, as soon as Solomon had ended his prayer of dedication, and consuming the sacrifices. Hales. —Solomon, and the elders of Israel, had done what they could to grace the solemnity of the introduction of the ark ; but God, by testifying his acceptance of what they did, put the greatest honor upon it. The cloud of glory that filled the house beautified it more than all the gold with which it was overlaid, or the precious stones with which it was garnished ; and yet that was no glory, in comparison with the glory of the Gospel dispensation (2 Cor. 3 : 8-10). H.

The solemnities of the service, the procession of the sacred ark from the city of David into its resting-place, the robed priests, the rapturous multitude, the unnumbered sacrifices, the music and the songs, must have formed altogether a marvellous spectacle. But of all the incidents of the day none could be compared with that of the sudden appearance of the Shekinah—the glory-cloud. This introduced a new supernatural element. The rest was human—man's handiwork, man's worship, man's glory ; this was Divine—the miraculous sign of the present and approving God. The appearance of the cloud set the seal of Divine acceptance on the temple and its service, linking it with all the glorious associations of the past—the climax and crown of a long series of miraculous Divine manifestations. Waite.

14. The priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, which, as it was an evidence that the law made men priests that had infirmity, so as (Bishop Patrick observes) it was a plain intimation that the Levitical priesthood should cease, and stand no longer to minister, when the Messiah should come, in whom *the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily*. In him the glory of God dwelt among us, but covered with a cloud. The Word was made flesh ; and when he comes to his temple, like a refiner's fire, *who may abide the day of his coming : And who shall stand when he appeareth ?* (Mal. 3 : 1, 2). H.

2 Chron. 6 : 1. Solomon's brief words of

Dedication. The real consecration of the Temple has taken place. And now the king, turning toward the Most Holy Place, filled with the Sacred Presence, spake these words of dedication, brief as became the solemnity : “ Jehovah hath said : to dwell in darkness—Building, I have built an house of habitation to Thee, and a settling-place for Thy dwelling ever ! ” In this reference to what Jehovah had said, it would not be any single utterance which presented itself to Solomon's mind. Rather would he think of them in their connection and totality—as it were, a golden chain of precious promises welded one to the other, of which the last link seemed riveted to the solemnity then enacting. Such sayings as Ex. 19 : 9 ; 20 : 21 ; Lev. 16 : 2 ; De. 4 : 11 ; 5 : 22 would crowd upon his memory, and seem fully realized as he beheld the Cloudy Presence in the Holy House. A. E.

God only can consecrate, but man may dedicate to God. One with the vast congregation, Solomon had worshipped and waited. And now he first recognizes God's entrance in the thick darkness of the cloud, and gratefully surrenders to Him the House he had prepared. Then turning his face to the people crowding the Great Outer Court, as a royal prophet, he blessed the host, and recited various occasions of special

thankfulness to God which had grown out of the history of this building. The particulars of this address were designed to put the living and acting generation in fresh remembrance of events and truths connected with this juncture of the nation's history, when the Divine mercies, already culminated in number and richness, were crowned and hallowed by the return and abiding with them of God Himself. B.—If Solomon had built this temple in the pride of his heart, as Ahasuerus made his feast, only to *show the riches of his kingdom, and the honor of his majesty*, it would not have turned at all to his account. But he here declares upon what inducements he undertook it, and they are such as not only justify, but magnify, the undertaking. He did it for the glory and honor of God ; this was his highest and ultimate end in it. It was *for the name of the Lord God of Israel, to be a house of habitation for him*. He has indeed, as to us, *made darkness his pavilion*, but let this house be the residence of that darkness ; for it is in the upper world that he dwells in light, such as no eye can approach. And he did it in compliance with the choice God had been pleased to make of Jerusalem, to be the city in which he would record his name (verse 6) ; *I have chosen Jerusalem*. H.

Section 288.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

1 KINGS 8 : 22-53. 2 CHRONICLES 6 : 12-42.

2 Chron. 6 : 12 AND he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands : (for Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court ; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven :) and he said, O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, or in the earth ; who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart : who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him : yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel ; if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk in my law as thou hast walked before me. Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David. But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth ? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house which I have builded ! Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee : that thine eyes may be open

toward this house day and night, even toward the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there ; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward
 21 this place. And hearken thou to the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place : yea, hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven ;
 22 and when thou hearest, forgive. If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and he come *and* swear before thine altar in this house : then
 23 hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, requiting the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head ; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.
 24 And if thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee ; and shall turn again and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house : then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel,
 25 and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers. When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee ; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict
 26 them : then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou teachest them the good way wherein they should walk ; and send rain upon thy
 27 land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance. If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar ; if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities ; whatsoever plague or whatsoever sickness there be ;
 28 what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart and his own sorrow, and shall spread forth
 29 his hands toward this house : then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest ; (for thou, even
 30 thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men ;) that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. Moreover concerning the stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm ; when they shall
 31 come and pray toward this house : then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for ; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that
 32 this house which I have built is called by thy name. If thy people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatsoever way thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this
 33 city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name : then hear thou from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver
 34 them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto a land far off or near ; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done perversely, and have dealt wickedly ;

I K. 8 : 48 If they return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, which carried them captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I
 49 have built for thy name : then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause ; and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee ; and give them compassion before those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them :
 50 for they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron : that thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them whensoever they
 51 cry unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the peoples of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

2 Chron. 6 : 40 Now, O my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine
 41 ears be attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O LORD God, be
 42 clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed : remember the mercies of David thy servant.

God would have a permanent House for various reasons. He would show that He was *abiding in the midst* of His people. He would give them an always visible reminder of what He *had been* to them, and a palpable pledge of what He *had promised* them. And he would impress the duty of worship while tangibly instructing them, through symbols and ceremonials, in the methods and meaning of worship. So, to assure them that the newly-constructed Temple *was* His Home, and to excite their fitting reverence, He had consecrated it by the visible descent of His glory, symbolized in a cloud-enfolding flame. All these considerations are expressed or implied in Solomon's prayer of Dedication. B.

The prayer was of unexampled sublimity : while it implored the perpetual presence of the Almighty, as the tutelar deity and sovereign of the Israelites, it recognized his spiritual and ilimitable nature. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built." It then recapitulated the principles of the Hebrew theocracy, the dependence of the national prosperity and happiness on the national conformity to the civil and religious law. *Milman.*

The text to this prayer is the law, especially the blessing and curse pronounced upon the people by Moses (Lev. 26 and De. 28.) Setting out from the blessing here promised, Solomon praises the Lord for its past fulfilment, after which follows the prayer for the averting of the curses alluded to. By the bestowment of the promised blessing the Lord had hitherto proved himself the only and true God in heaven and on earth, who keeps covenant and mercy with his servants who walk before him with all the heart. With this acknowledgment of God begins the prayer, for from this arises the right confidence for the petition, which is certain of being heard. *Keil.*

At no other point of Solomon's recorded career save this, and in no other connection than this prayer, have we any clear manifestation of a genuine piety. While everywhere we trace indications of superior intellect, only here do we see evidence of heart. The prayer, as a whole, evinces greatness of conception and depth of feeling. A matchless, merciful, covenant-keeping God, who has fulfilled and will fulfil every promise ; a God of infinite, universal supremacy, who yet condescends to dwell manifestly among men ; and one who is willing to meet every need in response to the call of a people or of every suppliant ; these ideas, which

comprise the spirit and substance of this prayer, show an equal grandeur of conception and justness of feeling respecting the revealed character of God and His relations to the nation and the race. Further, this prayer, in its form and particulars, is *emphatically a nation's prayer*. It recognizes God as the sovereign arbiter of a nation's experiences ; the source alike of its prosperity and adversity. It traces the great forms of national loss and trouble—war, pestilence, famine (and, we may add, financial reverses)—to His interposition for good. And not only the prayer, but God's answering words (2 Chron. 7 : 14), clearly intimate the remedy for all national calamities.

2 Chron. 12 : 14. *The attitude of Solomon and the invocation of his prayer.* Upon a prepared brazen scaffold Solomon had stood while addressing the people. Now he "kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." As a royal prophet, he had directed the offering of sacrifice, and probably himself officiated in the offering. Now, exercising the same office, and so far personating the greater *Son of David*, he intercedes for his people, only including his needs with theirs. The *invocation* of the prayer is peculiarly instructive and impressive. It is confined to two points, but these are all-comprehensive. Thou art the only God ; and that which chiefly distinguishes thee as God, that which constitutes thy greatest glory, is this, *that thou keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.* This is the one supreme truth of the whole Revelation, Old Testament and New. It is the one fact of every age and dispensation, upon which hangs the hope of man. God infinite, perfect, supreme, in wisdom, might, in holiness, truth, and grace ; and God devising and executing a plan of mercy, whereby He might offer and carry out a covenant of eternal redemption in behalf of every one whose accepting, trusting, penitent heart responds with obedience. This is the reach and meaning of this grandly simple invocation. Had Solomon only acted upon it in his later life, as David did, his history had been without sadness and his end had been bright. B.

14. *None like Him in heaven or in earth.* All the creatures have their fellow-creatures, but the Creator has not his peer. He is infinitely above all, and *over all, God blessed forever.* He is and will be true to every word that he has spoken ; and all that serve him in sincerity shall certainly find him both faithful and kind. Those that set God always before them and *walk before him*

with all their hearts, shall find him as good as his word, and better; he will both keep covenant with them, and show mercy to them. H.

15-17. *His acknowledgment of God's fulfilled promise to David, and prayer for its further fulfilment to himself.* That which should go before request—viz, thankful acknowledgment for previous mercies, here precedes, and so is made the basis of the prayer. Precisely this is the New Testament rule, found in that golden “command with promise” (Philippians 4 : 6, 7). Here, then, we gather from the method of Solomon's request for himself another instructive and impressive truth. A further practical point worthy of note is the *condition* connected with God's promise, as cited by Solomon (verse 16). Assuredly Solomon knew that his “taking heed to his way” and walking with a true obedient heart before God, was essential to the continued favor of God. And these his words, elsewhere repeated, teach us plainly the same changeless truth respecting ourselves; while his subsequent disobediences and idolatries strongly emphasize the truth, and warn us of our weakness and peril, and need of the grace of Jehovah Jesus. B.

The great burden of Solomon's impressive prayer is the faithfulness of God, as verified by the fulfilment of His promises to David his father, and on which he pleads for a like fulfilment of the promises made to himself, or rather made to David—but respecting himself. The promise does not supersede, but rather supplies ground for prayer on which the suppliant might rest, and which he might plead with God—and which if he do in faith, he will never miss the object because of any want of faithfulness in God. T. C.

17. *O God of Israel, let thy word be verified.* God's promises (as we have often observed) must be both the guide of our desires and the ground of our hopes and expectations in prayer. David had prayed (2 S. 7 : 25), *Lord, do as thou hast said.* The experiences we have of God's performing his promises should encourage us to depend upon them and plead them with God; and those who expect further mercies must be thankful for former mercies. H.

18-21. *His prayer for the nation in its various needs.* Thus far the prayer has been personal, and its suggested truths have applied to individuals. In the remaining verses he pleads in behalf of the nation. This general entreaty is prefaced with one of the sublimest human utterances of the Bible (verse 18). It is a conception of contrast between the illimitable universe overfilled with the presence of God and

this limited fragmentary sphere which is too narrow and inconsiderable to be worthy of His personal manifestation upon it, and yet to himself and to us, this expression conveys no definite thought save this: *God's infinite condescension in His personal manifestation to men.* The immediate reference of Solomon's question was to the *symbol*, merely, of God's presence; but the reach of his thought, and the truth it brings home to us, is the blessed *reality* of that Divine presence in the person of Jesus Christ, “the man who is Jehovah's fellow,” himself the Jehovah of the cloudy, shining symbol. Although in form a question, this is an expression of Solomon's faith that God will come, and will abide in this prepared sanctuary. For immediately follows the prayer which necessarily implies this faith, that God would hearken to him and to the supplication of Israel, when they should pray toward this place. He then proceeds to state the specific needs and calamities of the future, asking that those who should pray in the Temple or *toward it* (as expressive of dependence on its appointed ministries), might be supplied and relieved. Fitly and significantly pardon for the past was represented by the sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood. Fitly and beautifully grace for the future was exhibited in the incense-altar, the candlesticks and the tables of shewbread; intimating the threefold functions of the mediating Redeemer, who is *the way*, as the all-prevalent Intercessor, *the truth*, and *the life*. So understand *we* the spirit of this prayer, as the meaning of the Temple ministries is disclosed to us by Christ and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. B.

18. The first public recognition of Prayer as distinct from sacrifice—of the spiritual as distinct from the ceremonial mode of approaching God—is the Prayer of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple. And further, in this moment of the extremest triumph of ritual and material worship, was uttered one of the most spiritual truths that the Old Testament contains. “Behold the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded.” Stanley.—We have here a striking description of the immensity and omnipresence of God. We have frequent expressions in Scripture of God being “in heaven;” the meaning of which is, not that he who is in all places can be confined to any, or that any proper habitation can be ascribed to him, whom, as Solomon declares, the “heaven of heavens cannot contain;” but they are intended to represent his amazing height and dignity, not in place, but in power. Another rea-

son of the expression of God's being "in heaven," is to signify that, though of his real, actual presence there is no confinement, yet of his glory and majesty there is in the heavens a particular manifestation. There it is that his glory is declared, and there the righteous shall see his face, and be blessed with the peculiar manifestation of his power and majesty. In like manner here upon earth; in those places where he has been pleased more particularly to manifest his glory, to place his name, and to receive the homage of his servants, there God, in Scripture phrase, is said to *be*. Thus in the temple at Jerusalem, he, whom the "heaven of heavens cannot contain," did at this time deign to dwell, having appointed there to receive his tribute of worship. *Dr. S. Clarke.*

In the whole history of revelation we have answers to this question, "*Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?*" The Incarnation of Christ, His coming to be with men, was the greatest answer. He came to dwell upon our earth, to be a man among men. He should be called Emmanuel, it was said, which is, being interpreted, "God with us," God about us, God around us. And how beautifully was God revealed in Christ! He came with all the attributes of Divinity, came with all the powers of the Godhead, and yet identified Himself so with man as to be beside the lowliest, to throw no awe over the poorest! He came to identify himself with humanity in all its forms of weakness and sorrow, that He might take humanity and raise it up with Him to the very throne of God. He came to be with us, to be of us. He passed through all forms of suffering,—reproach, agony, torture, death,—that He might show us that He had sympathy with man in all his conditions. It is with us as individuals He comes, God with *us*, God with *you*, with *me*, in our homes, in our families, by morning, noon, and night. God in very deed comes and dwells with men on earth, just as Christ dwelt, and Christ loved, and Christ sympathized. He reveals to us the Father. The heart of God is seen in the heart of Christ; the affection of the great Father is manifested in the love of Christ. But, again, an answer was given, not only on the manifestation of Christ, but on that great day of Pentecost, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. By Him God comes to dwell with men forever, and His dwelling-place is your heart and mine. *M. Simpson.*

22, 23. Here the special or particular supplications begin. Like those of the Lord's prayer, they are seven in number. And the first of the seven concerns *oaths*. The king implores the

covenant-keeping God to watch over the covenants of words made in the now consecrated sanctuary, and to protect their sanctity by punishing the false swearer. There were cases in which the Mosaic law provided that an oath should be administered to suspected persons (Ex. 22 : 11 ; Lev. 5 : 1, 4). And there were other cases in which men of their own accord, for "an end of all strife," would make oath. God is here entreated to take cognizance of the oaths sworn before His altar (verse 31), and to be a swift witness against the false swearers (Mal. 3 : 5).

24, 25. The second special petition contemplates the case, which was morally certain to occur, of Hebrews taken captive in war and carried to a foreign land. To be separated from the commonwealth, the rites and the blessings of Israel, was one of the greatest calamities which could befall a Jew (De. 4 : 27, 28 ; Lev. 26 : 33 ; Ps. 137), and as such Solomon gives it a prominent place in his prayer.

26, 27. The third petition concerns the plague of *drought*. Just as rain, in the thirsty and sunburnt East, has ever been accounted one of the best gifts of God, so was drought denounced as one of His severest scourges (Lev. 26 : 19 ; De. 11 : 17). This petition finds an illustration in the public supplications which are still offered in the East, and by men of all creeds, for rain.

Reference is made to the withholding of rain; in verse 28 to "famine, pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, and caterpillar." Such troubles were sent in vain to bring the Egyptians to repentance. In the long run the violation of God's laws do bring disasters of the very kind specified here. If the law of industry be violated, the harvests fail; if the law of mutual dependence be ignored by nations, commerce is crippled, and impoverishment comes; if the laws against self-indulgence, pride, ambition, be defied the spendthrift has the result in poverty, the proud nation in the miseries of war. Even the disasters which are accounted "natural phenomena," then, should lead the wise-hearted to prayer, the sinful to penitence; and God will hear in heaven His dwelling-place, and answer and forgive.

28-31. The fourth petition refers to the various plagues mentioned in the law (Lev. 26 ; De. 28), as the punishment of apostasy or infidelity. *Hammond.*

29. There is here the recognition of something out of one's self as the ground of hope in circumstances of need. This essential element in true prayer is suggested by the words, "And

shall stretch forth his hands toward this place." The temple was intended to be a witness to the unseen, a help to faith, an incentive to all holy thought and feeling. It stood through all the changes of time, the shifting lights and shadows of the world around it, as an impressive symbol of the "everlasting covenant." It enshrined the "sure mercies of David." Within its hallowed enclosure were gathered the sacred historic records and relics, and the types and shadows of "better things to come." It told both of what God had done and what He had promised—the monument of the glorious past, the prophecy of the brighter future. There was deep meaning, then, in the suppliant "stretching forth his hands toward that house," as expressive of the attitude of his soul toward that which it symbolized. When some lonely worshipper in a distant corner of the land, some patient sufferer, some soldier in his agony on the field of battle, some captive, like Daniel, in a strange country, directed his eyes toward the holy place, it was a sort of pathetic appeal to God's own faithfulness, a silent but eloquent plea that He would not forget His covenant, would fulfil the hopes that He Himself had awakened, and not for their sakes alone, but for His own truth and mercy's sake, would hear and save. In all this the temple was a type of something nobler, Diviner than itself. The cross of Christ, in which all the promises are confirmed and sealed; the cross, which is both the altar of the Redeemer's sacrifice and the throne of His sovereignty, is the shrine of "truth and grace" to men. It stands, the connecting link between heaven and earth, the meeting-place of God and man, the key to all human history, the basis of our immortal hope. (Here, then, on this central object alike of Divine and human interest, must the eye of the suppliant be fixed. It is that pledge of Divine love and faithfulness, external to ourselves, embodied in the cross of Christ, that we must plead if we would find acceptance in our prayer. When God has thoroughly taught us what the "plague of our own heart" means, and has unveiled to us the blessed mystery of His mode of curing it, it will be the sustained habit of our life to stand as suppliants before Him "in the name of Jesus." Thus alone can we so link ourselves with the sanctities of a higher world as to make our common life Divine. *Waite.*

30. He, and *he only*, knows the hearts of the children of men. All men's thoughts, aims, and affections, are naked and open before him; and, however the imaginations and intents of our hearts may be concealed from men, angels, and

devils, they cannot be hid from God, who knows not only what is in the heart, but the heart itself, and all the beatings of it. *H.*

32, 33. The fifth petition contemplates the prayers which foreigners, attracted by the fame of Jerusalem, of its religion and sanctuary could offer toward the house. "It is quite in the spirit of the Mosaic law regarding strangers that Solomon, having first prayed God on behalf of his fellow-countrymen, should next go on to intercede for the strangers." The intercourse of the Hebrews at this period with foreign nations, and the influence they exercised on the Jewish thought and manners are also to be remembered. *Hammond.*—This prayer breathes a spirit of catholicity to foreigners which pure and original Judaism gets too little credit for. It seeks for an open door of privilege to all men, who are invited to look toward the temple, that all the people of the earth may recognize it as the house of God, and that they may know His name and fear Him. Besides prayer after defeat, there is also particularized here the case of prayer before battle. And, finally, there is the case of prayer on the event of captivity. Solomon entreats of God that He would have respect unto all such prayers, and pleads in argument the previous deliverances which had been wrought for Israel in virtue of their relationship to God. *T. C.*

34, 35. So far the royal suppliant has spoken of prayers offered in or at the temple. He now mentions two cases where supplications will be offered by penitents far distant from the holy city or even from the Holy Land. And first, he speaks of the armies of Israel on a campaign.

36-39. The last petition—the second of those which speak of prayers addressed toward the temple, or the Holy Presence which dwelt there, from a foreign land—contemplates as possible the captivity of the Hebrew nation. It has hence been too readily inferred that this portion of the prayer, at least, if not the preceding petition also, has been interpolated by a post-captivity writer. But there is really no solid reason for doubting its genuineness. Not only is it woven in the body of the prayer, but the captivity of Israel had been denounced as the punishment of persistent disobedience long before by Moses, and in the chapters to which such constant reference is made (Lev. 26 : 33, 44 ; De. 28 : 25, 36, 64 ; cf. 4 : 27), a fact which is in itself an indirect proof of genuineness, as showing that this petition is of a piece with the rest of the prayer. And when to this we add that the carrying of a conquered and refractory race into captivity was an established custom

of the East, we shall be inclined to agree with Bähr, that "it would have been more remarkable if Solomon had *not* mentioned it." *Hammond*.

36. It is the "*plague of the heart*," the burden of want or sadness in the secret soul, coupled with some kind of faith in Divine power, that moves men to pray. But this expression, "the plague of his own heart," has a deeper meaning. It opens to us all the dark, sad mystery of personal sinfulness, the moral disease that lurks within. There are times when the most careless, reckless spirit has glimpses of the unwelcome truth that this, after all, is the deepest cause of its disquietude. *Waite*.—Both Christ and His forerunner, when they began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world, uttered one sharp, piercing call: "Repent!" They did not go into minute specifications of every shade of sin, for they knew that they had for a witness a conscience in every breast, each heart knowing its own plague. They knew that there is always one comprehensive iniquity lodged farther in and spreading wider than any particular offence,—the sin of separation from God. *F. D. H.*

1 K. 8 : 51-53. In the three following verses we have a sort of general conclusion to the dedication prayer. It is hardly correct to say that these last words apply to all the preceding petitions—the plea "they are thy people" manifestly cannot apply in the case of verses 41-43. On the other hand, as little are they to be limited to the persons last mentioned in verses 46-50, though it is highly probable they were suggested by the thought of the captives. They are manifestly in close connection with the preceding verses. *Hammond*.

2 Chron. 6 : 40-42. In a fervent and beautiful conclusion Solomon invokes the entrance of Jehovah with the ark of his strength; entreats that the priests may faithfully minister, and the people gratefully receive the salvation of God; and closes with the touching appeal, *Turn not away the face of thine anointed, thy Messiah!* Remember the mercies of David, thy covenant mercies promised in behalf of thy covenanting people! *B.*—We may plead, as Solomon does here, with an eye to Christ. We deserve that God should turn away his face, that he should reject us and our prayers; but we come in the name of the Lord Jesus, *thine anointed, thy Messiah*, so the word is; *thy Christ*, so the LXX. Him thou hearest always, and wilt never *turn away his face*. We have no righteousness of our own to plead, but, Lord, *remember the mercies of David thy servant*. Christ

is God's Servant (Is. 42 : 1), and is called *David* (Hos 3 : 5). Lord, remember his mercies, and accept of us on account of them. Remember his tender concern for his Father's honor and man's salvation, and what he did and suffered from that principle. Remember the promises of the everlasting covenant which free grace has made to us in Christ, and which are called the *sure mercies of David* (Is. 55 : 3, and Acts 13 : 34). This must be all our desire, and all our hope, all our prayer, and all our plea, for it is all our salvation. *H.*

From this prayer of Solomon we learn, that all events proceed from God; that war, pestilence, famine, and other judgments, are inflicted by his hand, when men provoke him by their sins; that to have recourse to God by prayer, confession of sins, and true repentance, is the way to remedy these evils; and that he is always ready to hear and to deliver those who call upon him in their necessities, and with all their hearts turn unto him. *Ostervald*.

This outpouring of Solomon's heart embraces all the elements of true prayer. *Adoration*. God is recognized as the supreme God of the universe, who keeps covenant and shows mercy. *Confession*. The acknowledgment of unworthiness. *Supplication and intercession*. For himself, for those around him, for his people, for the stranger, Solomon pleads. He implores the blessings of preservation, of justice, of forgiveness, of the fruitful rain, of fertile fields, of health, of personal good, of victory in war, and restoration from captivity. Then he rises to the glorious heights of *thanksgiving*. God is merciful. He is good. His tender mercies are over all His works. He does hear prayer. He does bless. He does forgive. He does help. *S. Fallows*.

Additional Leading Truths and Lessons.

1. The character of the dedication indicates the main purpose of the temple, as also of the Christian Church, which has succeeded to its place and office. Not for its external richness or costliness, but for its internal use, this is the chief point of a true interest respecting it. Emphatically the church or house of God, it is essentially a *house of prayer*, of personal communion with God, of worship by praise, by confession, by supplication and intercession. The unfolding and impression by the Holy Ghost, of the *covenanting word* (to us in the Old and New Covenant) is God's part in the communion. This is His response of counsel and of promise to our worship, for counsel and promise include

the substance of the read or spoken word of God.

2. In harmony with this, from first to last all true religion is a religion of promise. God's covenantal relation with us lies at the basis of all others. Before everything else we need to know, to believe and to realize, that He has made and offers to us a covenant of pardon and peace on the simple condition of our penitent confession and grateful, childlike trust. On His part only it is a covenant of meritorious work, of inestimable cost and sacrifice !

3. Further, if covenant and promise be the vital element in our religion, then the great and precious promises of God should be the theme of habitual, grateful thought, they should prompt to continuous prayer, and should be the guide of desire and the basis of our hope in prayer. And further still, the truth is taught that fulfilled promises, especially if they are answered prayers, should elicit special thanks for the fulfilment, and so quicken faith and enlarge our expectation in future pleading with God. "In everything, by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, make known your requests unto God !"

4. "Hear thou, *and forgive !*" occurs as a plaintive refrain in all the general and special petitions of this prayer. It shows how distinct was the knowledge of sin among God's ancient people, and brings its impressive teaching through the centuries to us in these latter and brighter days. Both altars of the temple, the outer one of sacrifice and the inner one of incense or intercession, indicate the fact and the one only way of forgiveness ; through the double efficacy of Christ's offered blood and His preva-

lent advocacy. And in reliance upon this only method we, too, in all our worship, must continue this refrain, *Hear thou and forgive !*

5. Lastly, taking this prayer in its comprehensive application, it suggests a timely consideration to us (as Americans) in this centennial epoch of our history as a nation. For it is a nation's prayer ! As such it recognizes God as the source of national prosperity ; especially God's hand as bringing about the various events of war, pestilence, famine, and other reverses, by which all national history is marked, through which every nation is disciplined by Him for good. Both the prayer and God's answering words clearly intimate that the remedy for all these evils is that the people "humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways." If this be done, He declares, "then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Most timely is this lesson to us at this culminating period of a history as marked by evidences of God's special election as Israel ever had. Truly can we take up the burden of Isaiah's grateful ascription, "Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation. Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou hast wrought all our works in us !" And as we enter upon a second great period of national history, well may we, as members of this grand Commonwealth of States, ponder deeply these sublime facts of God's rule over us. And well may we unite our hearts in the frequent fervent utterance of this prayer of Solomon in its spirit. So shall we help to bring down the continued blessing of Him who alone can prosper and thus perpetuate our nation ! B.

Section 289.

FIRE CONSUMES THE SACRIFICES. ISRAEL WORSHIPS AND THE LEVITE CHOIRS PRAISE. SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF BLESSING. HIS DEDICATION OF THE SACRED COURTS BY SACRIFICES. SEVEN DAYS OF FESTAL GLADNESS FOLLOWING SEVEN DAYS OF DEDICATION. PEOPLE DISMISSED TO THEIR HOMES.

1 KINGS 8 : 54-66. 2 CHRONICLES 7 : 1-10.

2 Chron. 7 : 1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices ; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. And all the children of Israel looked on, when the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD was *upon the house* ; and they bowed themselves with their

faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and gave thanks unto the LORD, saying, For he is good ; for his mercy *endureth* forever. And the priests stood, according to their offices ; the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to give thanks unto the LORD, for his mercy *endureth* forever, when David praised by their ministry : and the priests sounded trumpets before them ; and all Israel stood.

1 K. 8 : 54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread forth toward heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised : there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers : let him not leave us, nor forsake us : that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel, as every day shall require : that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD, he is God ; there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day. And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. And Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace-offerings which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

2 Chron. 7 : 7 Moreover the same day Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD ; for there he offered the burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings : because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offering, and the meal-offering, and the fat of the peace-offering.

1 K. 8 : 65 So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, and they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days, even fourteen days.

2 Chron. 7 : 10 And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away, and they blessed the king and went away unto their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

Principal events that followed, completing the service of Dedication. First, the visible answer to this prayer in the sight of all the people, and the further confirmation of God's acceptance of the Temple as His dwelling-place. Upon the first prepared burnt-offerings, which had been laid upon the new great altar of sacrifice, "when Solomon had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices." From "the glory of the Lord," or the cloud with its enfolded light and flame, as again it descended from heaven, shot forth the consuming fire upon the sacrifices. So conclusive and satisfactory was the answer, that "when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good ; for his mercy *endureth* forever !"

Next occurs the closing benediction upon "all the congregation of Israel" by the King (1 K.

8 : 56-61). These words recall the simple, heartfelt utterances of David and Moses. Again, the thought recurs with emphasis, as we read these words of assurance, of earnest prayer, and of solemn injunction, that the sin and fall of Solomon had no excuse but the greater aggravation in his clear knowledge of God and His covenant, of good and evil. Then, with final sacrifices, extending over many days, and including in the festival the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, was the dedication of the House of the Lord completed, and the glad, grateful people dismissed to their homes.

One other incident (Sec. 291) completes the sacred narrative of the matter. It is a second appearance of God to Solomon by night, soon after the dedication, directly and affirmatively answering his prayer, and repeating the encouraging and warning word which He had uttered at Gibeon. Not for want of warning surely, and certainly not for lack of the highest and noblest incitements to fidelity, did Solomon afterward

stray from faith and duty, and finally cast disrespect upon God's house and worship! The whole of this Divine answer has instruction, warning, and prophecy for every generation of nations and individuals. To Solomon and to Israel its warning became a fulfilled prophecy! B.

1. The fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice (verse 1). In this way, God testified his acceptance of Moses (Lev. 9 : 24), of Gideon (Jud. 6 : 21), of David (1 Chron. 21 : 26), of Elijah (1 K. 18 : 38); and in general, to accept the burnt-sacrifice is, in the Hebrew phrase, to turn it to ashes (Ps. 20 : 3). The fire came down here, not upon the killing of the sacrifices, but the praying of the prayer. H.

3. Fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifices upon the altar, and the glory, which had previously filled and consecrated the holy place, rested visibly to the thronging people upon the now complete and dedicated structure. They "bowed themselves to the pavement, and worshipped, and gave thanks unto Jehovah, saying, *For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.*" B.—Which was the greater, the external magnificence, or the moral sublimity of this scene? Was it the temple, situated on its commanding eminence, with all its courts, the dazzling splendor of its materials, the innumerable multitudes, the priesthood in their gorgeous attire, the king, with all the insignia of royalty, on his throne of burnished brass, the music, the radiant cloud filling the temple, the sudden fire flashing upon the altar, the whole nation upon their knees? Was it not, rather, the religious grandeur of the hymns and of the prayer: the exalted and rational views of the Divine Nature, the union of a whole people in the adoration of the one Great, Incomprehensible, Almighty, Everlasting Creator? *Milman.*

The Dedication Concluded (as it commenced) with a Blessing.

1 K. 8 : 54-61.

Rising from his knees the king turned once more to the people, and expressed the feelings of all in terms of mingled praise and prayer, basing them on such Scriptural passages as De. 12 : 9, 10; Josh. 21 : 44; 23 : 14, and, in the second part of his address, on Lev. 26 : 3-13; De. 28 : 1-14. But it deserves special notice, that throughout the tone is of the loftiest spirituality. For, if the king asks for continued help and blessing from the Lord, it is for the express purpose "that He may incline our hearts to Him," "to keep His commandments;" and, if

he looks for answers to prayer, it is "that all the people of the earth may know that Jehovah is God, and that there is none else." A. E.

He blessed as one having authority; never were words more fully spoken, or more pertinently; never was congregation dismissed with that which was more likely to affect them and abide with them. He begins with blessing God. He gives God the glory of the great and kind things he had done for Israel (verse 56). He blesses God who has given, not wealth, or power, or victory to Israel, but *rest*. He compares the blessings God had bestowed upon them, with the promises he had given them, that God might have the honor of his faithfulness, and the truth of that word of his, which he has *magnified above all his name*. He refers to the *promises given by the hand of Moses*, as he did to those which were made to David. Of these he says, *There has not failed one word of all his good promises*; this discharge he gives in the name of all Israel, to the everlasting honor of the Divine faithfulness, and the everlasting encouragement of all those that build upon the Divine promises.

He blesses himself and the congregation, expressing his earnest desire and hope of these four things. (1) The presence of God with them, that is all in all to the happiness of a church and nation, and of every particular person. Solomon dismisses them with this blessing, "*The Lord be present with us*, and that will be comfort enough, when we are absent from each other; *the Lord our God be with us*, as he was with our fathers (verse 57), *let him not leave us*; let him be to us to-day and to ours forever, what he was to those that went before us." (2) The power of his grace upon them; "*Let him be with us* and continue with us, not that he may enlarge our coasts and increase our wealth, but *that he may incline our hearts to himself, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments*" (verse 58). Spiritual blessings are the best blessings, which we should covet earnestly to be blessed with: our hearts are naturally averse to our duty and apt to decline from God; it is his grace that inclines them, grace that must be obtained by prayer. (3) An answer to the prayer he had now made, "*Let these my words be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night* (verse 59). Let a gracious return be made to every prayer that shall be made here, and that will be a continual answer to this prayer." What Solomon here asks for his prayer, is still granted in the intercession of Christ, which his supplication was a type of; that powerful prevailing intercession *is before the Lord our God day and night*, for our great Advocate attends continually to this very thing, and

we may depend upon him to maintain our cause (against the adversary that accuses us *day and night*, Rev. 12 : 10), *and the common cause of his people Israel at all times*, upon all occasions, as the matter shall require, so as to speak for us *the word of the day in its day*, as the original here reads it, from which we shall receive grace sufficient, suitable, and seasonable, *in every time of need*. (4) The glorifying of God in the enlargement of his kingdom among men. Let Israel be thus blessed, thus favored ; not that all people may become tributaries to us, but *that all people may know that the Lord is God*, and he only, and may come and worship him (verse 60). With this Solomon's prayers, like *the prayers of his father, David the son of Jesse, are ended* (Ps. 72 : 19, 20), *Let the whole earth be filled with his glory* : we cannot close our prayers with a better summary than this, *Father, glorify thy name*.

He solemnly charges his people to continue and persevere in their duty to God ; having spoken to God for them, he here speaks from God to them, and those only would fare the better for his prayers that were made better by his preaching ; his admonition at parting is, "*Let your heart be perfect with the Lord our God* (verse 61) ; let your obedience be universal without dividing, upright without dissembling, and constant without declining ;" this is evangelical perfection. H.

Though Solomon assumed for the time the priestly function, his utterance was not cast into the usual form of priestly benediction. It was rather an ascription of praise to the God who had fulfilled His promises and given rest to His people, and an exhortation to them that they on their part should follow that path of life in which alone they could hope to realize the further fulfilment of those promises, and enjoy the heritage of blessing that was theirs. Solomon felt that all the impassioned supplications that he had been pouring out before the Lord, and all the sympathetic enthusiasm of the people in these temple services, would be but a mockery unless he and they were prepared to walk with all fidelity in the way of God's commandments. They must go back to their posts of honor and responsibility, to the privacy of their homes, to their haunts of busy life, to their paths of commerce and of labor. Let them worship there. Let them dwell with God there. Let them embody there, in all the forms of practical virtue, the spirit of devotion that has inspired them amid these hallowed scenes. True prayer sheds a hallowing influence over the entire field of a man's daily activity. When his soul has been face to face with God, absorbed

in Divine communion, the inspiration of holy thought and feeling of which he has been conscious will inevitably betray itself in the way in which he acts when he mingles with the things and the beings of earth. The glory of heaven that has shone upon him cannot fail to be reflected in the beauty of his character and deed. A prayerful spirit is an earnest, pure, upright, loving spirit, and such a spirit will govern the whole form and method and aim of a man's life. Prayer solves difficulties, clears one's vision of the path of duty, draws strength from Divine sources for all toil and suffering, raises the tone and level of moral action, fortifies the spirit for any emergency, fills the heart with the peaceful joy of a better world. On the other hand, the conduct of life necessarily affects for good or ill the spirit and efficacy of prayer. If it is needful to pray in order that we may live as Christians, it is equally needful that we should live as Christians in order rightly to pray. The importance of prayer as one chief function of spiritual life doubles the importance of all our actions, because our prayers are so much as our doings are. According as we stand toward the world, with all the social relationships and duties that belong to our place in it, so do we stand before the mercy-seat. Let a man be morally reckless in the intercourse and transactions of daily life, and all freedom, "boldness," gladness in prayer is at an end. Anything like loving, confiding converse with the "Father who seeth in secret" is impossible to him. Let there then be a Divine unity and harmony in our life. Let our conduct in all human relationships show us to be what, in our hours of devotion, we seem to ourselves to be. Let it be our ambition every day "to live more nearly as we pray." *Waite*.

The consecrating prayer opened and closed with adoration. It spread before God all the wants of the people, and asked from Him deliverance in every time of need ; but the whole petition culminated in the ever-recurring pleading for forgiveness. This is the burden of the whole temple service, and this character is reproduced in Christian worship. There is no longer a sanctuary in the old exclusive sense, since the blood was shed which has redeemed the whole earth to God. Our houses of prayer are not now more holy in themselves than our homes. Let us consecrate them by consecrating ourselves to God, and rendering to Him the worship which is His due—the sacrifice of our whole being. Let our prayers, like that of Solomon, begin and end with adoration, and let the burden of them be the expression of our repentance for sin. Let

them have, like the prayer of the theocratic king, a breadth of intercession for the whole people of God, and let them lay at the foot of the cross the burden of the woes of humanity and the needs of the Church. *E. de P.*

The Festal Sacrifices.

62, 63. The ceremonial of dedication was followed, as would naturally be the case, by additional sacrifices on a scale of unusual grandeur. Apart from their religious use and significance, the sacrifices testified to the devotion of the giver, who on this of all days must not appear before the Lord empty, and they also afforded materials for the great and prolonged feast by which this auspicious event in the history of Israel must be commemorated. *Hammond.*

They had abundant joy and satisfaction, while they attended at God's house, for there (1) Solomon offered a great sacrifice, enough to have drained the country of cattle, if it had not been a very fruitful land. The heathen thought themselves generous when they offered sacrifices by *hundreds* (*hecatombs* they called them), but Solomon offered them by *thousands*. All these sacrifices could not be offered in one day, but in the several days of the feast; thirty oxen a day served Solomon's table, but thousands shall go to God's altar. The flesh of the peace-offerings, which belonged to the offerer, Solomon treated the people with. The brazen altar was not large enough to receive all these sacrifices, so that, to serve the present occasion, they were forced to offer many of them *in the middle of the court* (verse 64). *H.*

In this prodigious number of sacrifices—in round numbers 3000 oxen and 18,000 sheep for every day of the festival—one feature is liable to be overlooked, namely, that all these sacrifices were "*peace-offerings*," with the exception, of course, of the usual burnt-offerings. In all these—and king and princes and people alike brought their thousands—all was first given to God, but the bulk was given back by God to the sacrificers. With the exception of the fat, etc., burnt on the altar, and the blood (which was the life), poured out at its base, and the customary portion of the priests, all the rest was carried home by the offerer to provide a *feast* for him and his family. The peace-offering was thus a social festival. And the same remark applies to the still greater number—a quarter of a million—of paschal lambs offered year by year in later times. The blood was sprinkled as a memorial before God, but the lamb was roasted entire to provide a supper for the household. In all these

sacrifices God graciously entertained those who offered them with their own oblations—which He had first given them—at His own table. And herein we have an illustration of God's gracious way of dealing with our gifts and offerings. He accepts them at our hands, but gives them back for our use and enjoyment. We present our sacrifice, and He spreads a banquet for our souls. It is a curious circumstance, and one that shows how entirely this principle has been overlooked, that "*sacrifice*," which properly means "*something made sacred*," "*consecrated*," has come to be a synonym for "*loss*," "*privation*." But this a true sacrifice can never be. There is no such thing as giving at a loss to the Lord of all. He insists on paying us back a hundredfold. All our offerings are in this sense peace-offerings. He sends us away laden with our own gifts, "*joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness of the Lord*." *Hammond.*

65. *The people joyful.* **From the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt**—i.e., from one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The people flocked from all quarters. **Seven days and seven days, even fourteen days.** The first seven were occupied with the dedication, and the other seven devoted to the Feast of Tabernacles. The particular form of expression indicates that the fourteen days were not continuous, and that some interval occurred in consequence of the great day of atonement falling on the tenth of the seven month (verse 2), and the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was on the twenty-third, when the people returned to their homes with feelings of the greatest joy and gratitude "*for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David His servant and for Israel His people*." *Jamieson.*

The Temple Superseded by the Synagogue.

Complicated as modern Judaism seems, it may be summed up in one brief sentence: The Synagogue has taken the place of the Temple. This one fact underlies all the rest. It is, of course, that ever since the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, the services of the Temple have wholly ceased. Sacrifices, a ministering priesthood, and a mitred high-priest are impossible out of the one national Sanctuary on Mount Moriah, which has lain waste these eighteen centuries. The cessation of the Temple-services is the most significant fact in history. As at the commencement of the Old Testament the Jewish people and its history were, so to speak, summed up in one individual—Abraham, so at its close the royalty, the priesthood, nay, the

nation itself in Jesus Christ. Thus when "the fulness of the time came," and the purpose of all had been served, the same Hand which had opened the Temple-gates, closed them and for-

ever. But long before that another order of things from the Temple-services had gradually been preparing in the institution of the Synagogue. A. E.

Section 290.

USES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE STRUCTURE, ITS COURTS, AND THEIR FURNITURE ; WITH SUGGESTIONS TOUCHING THE PRIESTLY RITUAL AND SERVICE.

THE people of Israel were in a state of complete spiritual ignorance when rescued by Moses from their captivity in Egypt. All the prescribed regulations for worship, for outward conduct, and social life, were necessary, and suited to introduce into their minds lost spiritual ideas—as of holiness, truth, and responsibility. So as also a part of the Divine plan, the appointment of the Tabernacle, with its apartments jealously secluded from view, was designed and fitted to suggest the idea of a personal God abiding with his people ; and yet His studious self-concealment added the new idea of reverence as His claim and due. Although four hundred years had now elapsed since the conquest of Canaan, with all the prophetic teaching and Providential training of the people, they were at this time not far advanced in the knowledge of spiritual truth or worship. Therefore it was that the system of external rite and worship needed still to be continued. And so, when the tribes had been consolidated into a nation and the whole people had exchanged the tent for a permanent habitation, it was ordered that the movable Sanctuary should be succeeded by a House of the Lord. Beside its actual uses, too, there was this advantage in a *fixed, abiding* structure, that it would stand forth as a visible monument and palpable evidence of all that God had been to His people, and a token and pledge of all He had promised them. So it was that the Temple became the central object of interest, affection, and reverence. B.

The Purpose of the Temple. (1) To furnish a fitting place for the public worship of God. The services kept Jehovah prominently before the people, and perpetuated and promoted religion. (2) To symbolize the presence of God among his people. Hence the house, with its holy place, and holy of holies. Other nations had their idols. Israel had its house wherein no image stood. (3) To present in symbols the great

truths of redemption. These were expressed by the altar and the sacrifices (Lev. 1 : 1-5 ; 2 Chron. 7 : 1-14 ; Heb. 9 : 22). Much of the Epistle to the Hebrews is intended to show the relation between the services of the old covenant and the salvation under the new. (4) To strengthen the bond of union among the tribes. For this purpose there was but one Temple and one altar for all the Hebrew world, and all rival shrines were forbidden (De 12 : 8-14 ; Josh. 22 : 10-27). Three times in each year the people gathered from all Israel for worship (De. 16 : 16). Notice the effect of this on the nation (1 K. 12 : 26-28). *J. L. Hurlbut.*

Principles Symbolized in the Temple and Its Service. (1) The revealing and sanctifying presence of God in the midst of the Church. In the holy of holies God's manifested presence was seen, and from here He uttered His voice to the nation. (2) The meeting of God and His people's continuous and reciprocal intercourse between them. The holiest represented more what God gave ; the holy place what the people gave, though what they gave was but made up of what they had received. (3) Separation of the Church from the world necessary to intercourse with God, even its lowest forms. This was shown by the courts. (4) The progressiveness through various stages of this intercourse with God and nearness to Him, once begun by separation from without. (5) The foundation of all intercourse in atonement by blood ; and that each new stage of progress must be won by atonement ; and that all intercourse and service and life of men around God must, however true, and pure, and high, yet be atoned for as in many ways sinful. (6) The necessity of holiness in those drawing near to God (Fs. 24). This was shown by the repeated separations of those who approached from the larger body who were kept back ; by the gradual diminution of the number approaching—as general nation, when worship-

pers in the court, then priests in holy place, then high-priest in the holiest ; by the multiplication of ceremonies of purification, and the symbols of confession of sins, and the gradual elevation in character and sanctity and official place of those who approached in proportion to the closeness of their approach. *A. B. Davidson.*

God intended, by the symbolic imagery of the Jewish ritual, to prefigure and elucidate the great truths and facts connected with the person and work of Christ ; to portray, as it were, by a series of sublime hieroglyphics, the spiritualities and glories of the Gospel dispensation. Almost everything under the law was typical. There was a typical sanctuary and a typical service ; typical victims were slain, typical sacrifices were offered, and offered by priests who themselves were types of the Lord Jesus Christ, the High-Priest of our profession. This system of types the apostle describes by two very appropriate and expressive terms. He calls them "patterns" and "shadows ;" "patterns"—that is, models, shapes, outlines, not yet filled up ; and "shadows," dim reflections—imperfect resemblances, which just represent the general form and contour of the objects, but not their distinct features or breathing lineaments. *Bannister.*

At the very entrance to the court the three grand truths of the Gospel of Christ were forced upon the Israelites' attention. The gate spoke of Christ : "I am the door : by me if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." The brazen altar spoke of Christ : "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." The laver spoke of Christ : "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me ;" "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." *Whitefield.*—Jesus Christ puts an end to all the questions and ardent longings of the Old Testament. All that either the tabernacle or the temple of the old covenant promised, Christ has fulfilled. All that the sacrifices of the Old Testament promised, Christ has accomplished with the one sacrifice which He Himself was, and which He brought. All that the offices of prophet, priest, and king promised in the Old Testament, Christ has fulfilled. *Caspars.*

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE, ITS FURNITURE AND SERVICE.

David often speaks with much affection, both of the *house of the Lord*, and of the *courts of our God*. Both without doors and within, there was that which typified the grace of the Gospel, and

shadowed out good things to come, of which the substance is Christ. *H.*

The sanctuary is the *meeting-place of God and the people* ; but this in the sense that here the people come to Jehovah in His dwelling-place, which He has established in the midst of His people. Accordingly, in the sanctuary is embodied the *idea of God's dwelling among the people of Israel*. But at the same time, the people are to be made conscious, that although the Holy God condescends to dwell among His people, yet, on account of the people's sinfulness, this communion cannot be accomplished directly, but only through the mediation of the people's intercessor, who holds the office of reconciliation. The people are therefore limited to the court surrounding the sanctuary and the sanctuary itself is only allowed to be entered by the priests. But even these priests are not in a position to establish a full communion with God (comp. Heb. 9 : 8). For this reason Jehovah's dwelling-place is divided into two apartments : the veiled, *holiest of all*, in which Jehovah, the revealed, and yet hidden and in a manner unapproachable, God, is enthroned in the darkness ; and the *holy place*,—the place of the priests and their service, which on this account is the symbol of the mediation of the covenant. There is a relation between the sanctuary and heaven so far as this, that the shekinah in the latter corresponds to the shekinah in the former. There is, however, a *contrast* between the two Divine dwelling-places ; for in heaven God dwells in His majesty as Ruler of the world,—in the earthly tabernacle He dwells in His condescending grace. *O.*

In the depths of the Holy of Holies, and for the high-priest as for all Israel, there was the revelation of a righteous Will requiring righteousness in man. And over the ARK was the MERCY-SEAT (Heb. *kappôreth*, *cover*), which covered the Ark, and was the witness of a mercy covering sins. And over the mercy-seat were the CHERUBIM. Representing as they did created life in its highest form, their overshadowing wings, meeting as in token of perfect harmony, declared that nature as well as man found its highest glory in subjection to a Divine Law, that men might take refuge in that Order, as under the shadow of the wings of God. Ark, mercy-seat, cherubim, the very walls, were all overlaid with gold, the noblest of all metals, the symbol of light and purity, sunlight itself as it were, fixed and embodied, the token of the incorruptible, of the glory of a great king. Into the inner sanctuary neither people nor the priests as a body ever entered. Strange as it

may seem, that in which everything represented light and life was left in profound solitude. Once only in the year, on the Day of Atonement, might the high-priest enter. From all others, from the high-priest at all other times, the Holy of Holies was shrouded by the double Veil, bright with many colors and strange forms. Within the veil light and truth were seen in their unity.

The outer sanctuary was one degree less awful in its holiness than the inner. It was to be trodden daily by the priests, as if by men perpetually conscious of the nearness of God, of the mystery behind the veil. Barefooted and in garments of white linen, they accomplished their ministrations. And here, too, were other emblems of Divine realities. With no opening to admit light from without, it was illumined only by the golden LAMP with its seven lights, never all extinguished together, the perpetual symbol of all derived gifts of wisdom and holiness in man, reaching their mystical perfection when they shine in God's sanctuary to His glory. The SHEWBREAD, the bread of the Divine Presence, served as a token that, though there was no form or likeness of the Godhead, He was yet there, accepting all offerings, recognizing in particular that special offering which represented the life of the nation at once in the distinctness of its tribes and in its unity as a people. The meaning of the ALTAR OF INCENSE was not less obvious. The cloud of fragrant smoke was the emblem of the heart's adoration (Ps. 141 : 2).

Outside the sanctuary, but within the consecrated precincts, was the COURT, fenced in by an enclosure, yet open to all the congregation, except the ceremonially unclean. No Gentile might pass beyond the curtains of the entrance, but every member of the priestly nation might thus far "draw near" to the presence of Jehovah. Here, therefore, stood the ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING, at which SACRIFICES in all their varieties were offered by penitent or thankful worshippers, the brazen LAVER at which those worshippers purified themselves before they sacrificed, the priests before they entered into the sanctuary. Here the graduated scale of holiness ended. *Dic. B.*

The temple, with its service, was a visible representation of a spiritual fact for the then present; it was a parable of the inmost reality of communion between man and God; and it was, therefore, a prophecy both of the full realization of his presence among men, in the temple of Christ's body, and of the yet future communion of heaven, which is set before us by the

"great voice, . . . saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." The threefold division into court of the worshippers, holy place for the priests and holiest of all, was not peculiar to the tabernacle and temple. It signifies the separation which, after all nearness, must still exist. God is unrevealed after all revelation; afar off, however near; shrouded in the utter darkness of the inmost shrine, and only approached by the priestly intercessor with the blood of the sacrifice. Like all the other arrangements of the sanctuary, the division of its parts declares a permanent truth, which has impressed itself on the worship of all nations; and it reveals God's way of meeting the need-by-outward rites for the then present, and by the mediation of the great High-priest in the time to come, whose death rent the veil, and whose life will, one day, make the holiest place in the heavens patent to our feet.

God's special abode, the *Holy of Holies*, was a tiny chamber, closed in from light, the form, dimensions, and materials, and furniture of which were all significant. It measured ten cubits, or fifteen feet, every way, thereby expressing, in its cubical form, and in the predominance of the number ten, stability and completeness. It will be remembered that the same cubical form is given to the heavenly city, in the Apocalypse, for the same reason. There, in the thick darkness, unseen by mortals except for the one approach of the high-priest on the day of atonement, dwelt the "glory" which made light in the darkness, and flashed on the gold which covered all things in the small shrine.

The *Ark* of the testimony was a small chest of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and containing the two tables of the law, which were called the testimony, as bearing witness to Israel of God's will concerning their duty, and as therein bearing witness, too, of what he is. Nor must the other part of the witness-bearing of the law be left out of view,—that it testifies against the transgressors of itself. The ark was the centre point of the Divine revelation, the very throne of God; and it is profoundly significant that its sole contents should be the tables of stone. Egyptian arks contained symbols of their gods, degrading, bestial, and often impure; but the true revelation was a revelation to the moral sense, of a Being who loves righteousness. Other faiths had their mysteries, whispered in the inmost shrine, which shunned the light of the outer courts; but here the revelation within the veil was the same as that spoken on the house-tops. The "*Mercy-seat*," covered the ark above, and spoke the need for, and the provision

of a means whereby the witness of the law against the worshipper's sins should be, as it were, hid from the face of the enthroned God.

We step from the mystery of the inner shrine out to the comparatively inferior sacredness of the holy place, daily trodden by the priests. There stand in it the table for the so-called shewbread, the great lamp-stands, and the golden altar of incense. These were intimately connected with each other, and represented various aspects of the spiritual character of true worshippers. The holy place was eminently the people's, just as the most holy place was eminently God's. True, only the priests entered it; but they did so on behalf of the nation. We may expect, therefore, to find special reference to the human side of worship in its equipments; and we do find it. The *altar of incense* was in idea, as in locality, the centre. The full details of its construction and use are found in Ex. 30. Twice a day sweet incense was burned on it, and no other kind of sacrifice was permitted; but once a year, it was sprinkled, by the high-priest, with expiatory blood. The meaning is obvious. The symbolism of incense as representing prayer is frequent in Scripture, and most natural. What could more beautifully express the upward aspirations of the soul, or the delight of God in these, than the incense sending up its wreaths of fragrant smoke? Incense gives no fragrance nor smoke till it is kindled; and the censer has to be constantly swung to keep up the glow, without which there will be no "odor of a sweet smell." So, cold prayers are no prayers, but are scentless, and unapt to rise. The heart must be as a coal of fire, if the prayer is to come up before God with acceptance. Twice a day the incense was kindled; and all day long, no doubt, it smoldered, "a perpetual incense before the Lord." So, in the life of true communion, there should be daily seasons of special devotion, and a continual glow. The position of the altar of incense was right in the line between the altar of burnt-offering, in the outer court, and the entrance to the holiest place; by which we are taught that acceptable prayer follows on reconciliation by sacrifice, and leads into the secret place of the Most High. The yearly atonement for the altar taught that evil imperfection cleaves to all our devotion, which needs and receives the sprinkling of the blood of the great sacrifice.

The *candlestick* is an emblem of the Church as recipient and communicative of light, in all the applications of that metaphor, to a dark world. As the sacred lamps streamed out their hospitable rays into the darkness all the night,

so God's servants are lights in the world. The lamps burned with derived light, which had to be fed as well as kindled. So we are lighted by the touch of the great Aaron, and his gentle hand tends the smoking wick and nourishes it to a flame. We need the oil of the Spirit to sustain the light. The lamp was a clustered light, representing in its metal oneness the formal and external unity of Israel. The New Testament unity is of a better kind. The seven candlesticks are made one because He walks in the midst, not because they are welded on to one stem.

Consistency of symbolism requires that the *table of shewbread* should, like the altar and the candlestick, express some phase of true worship. Its interpretation is less obvious than that of the other two. The name means literally "bread of the face;" that is, bread presented to and ever lying before God. The best explanation keeps up the congruity, by taking the material bread, which is the result of God's blessing on man's toil, as a symbol of the spiritual results of God's blessing on man's spiritual toil, or, in other words, of practical righteousness or good works, and conceives that these are offered to God, by a strong metaphor, as acceptable food. It is a bold representation, but we may quote "I will sup with him" as proof that it is not inadmissible; and it is not more bold than the declaration that our obedience is "an odor of a sweet smell." So the three pieces of furniture in the holy place spoke of the true Israel, when cleansed by sacrifice and in communion with God, as instant in prayer, continually raying out the light derived from him, and zealous of good works, well pleasing to God. A. M.

The holy place was the sanctuary of forgiven hearts. It was the retreat of those whose sins had been forgiven through the expiation upon the bloody altar without. True, they entered it then only vicariously in the person of the priest; "the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way was not yet made plain by the sacrifice of Christ." But all in that sanctuary spoke of reconciliation and love. The altar was the altar of love. The flame upon it was the flame of love, and the costly offering of the fragrant spices was symbolic of the offering of the heart's best treasures, its loftiest ambitions, its richest affections, its purest and most fragrant devotions.

Here, then, have we another lesson for all time! Oh, man, it is thy heart which the God of heaven demands as an oblation upon His altar; not thy hands, even though they be busy hands;

not thy feet, even though they be swift feet ; not thy brain, even though it be a tireless brain ; not the homage of intellect to truth ; not the stern bending of the will like the oak before the blast, but thy *heart*, oh, man—thy heart, with its capacities to love and hope, to fear and trust—thy heart, with its wealth of affection. It is that alone which can be fuel for the flame upon the altar of love. Nothing but love will satisfy love. Upon that altar of redemption where the love of God to thee is burning with so quiet, holy a flame, the heart, thy whole heart must be laid, that under fires which burn but consume not, its purified affections, set free from earthly dross, may rise like the white cloud of fragrant frankincense to heaven, and be glorified in the light of the Sun of righteousness. *Witherspoon.*

We pass outward and stand in the court, which was always open to the people. There, before the door, is the *altar of burnt-offering*. Its distinctive character was that on it the blood of the slain sacrifices was offered. It was the place where sinful men could begin to meet with God, the foundation of all the communion of the inner sanctuary. We need not discuss mere details of form and the like. The great lesson taught by the altar and its place, is that reconciliation is needed, and is only possible by sacrifice. As a symbol, it taught every Israelite what his own conscience, once awakened, endorsed, that sin must be expiated before the sinner and God can walk in concord. As prophecy, it assured those whose hearts were touched with longing, that God would himself provide the lamb for the burnt-offering, in some way as yet unknown. For us, it is an intended prefiguration of the great work of Jesus Christ. "We have an altar." We need that altar at the beginning of our fellowship with God, as much as Israel did. A Christianity which does not start from the altar of burnt-offering will never get far into the holy place, nor ever reach at all that innermost shrine where the soul lives and adores, silent before the manifest God between the cherubim. The *lavers* were intended for the priests' use, in washing hands and feet before ministering at the altar or entering the tabernacle. They teach the necessity for purity, in order to priestly service. Thus these three divisions of the temple and its court set forth the stages in the approach of the soul to God, beginning with the reconciling sacrifice and cleansing water, advancing to closer communion by prayer, impartation of light received, and offering of good works to God, and so entering within the veil into secret sweetnesses of union with God, which attains its completeness only

when we pass from the holy place on earth to the most holy in the heavens. A. M.

The Altar of Sacrifice.

The simplest place of worship is the *altar*, which is first mentioned in Gen. 8 : 20 ; a *height rising toward heaven*, signifying the ascent of the devotion embodied in sacrifice. The common name for the altar designates it as the *place of sacrifice*. The first condition for a place of worship is, that it *has been chosen and sanctified by God*, and has *actually been witnessed to as the place of His revelation*. As already in the time of the *patriarchs* altars were set up chiefly in places consecrated by theophanies (Gen. 12 : 7 ; 26 : 24 f.), so, according to *Mosaic law*, only that place is permitted to be a place of worship where God has established the memory of His name (Ex. 20 : 24) ; which He has *chosen to cause His name to dwell there* (De. 12 : 5, 11 ; comp. Sec. 56) ; which He fills with His glory (Ex. 40 : 34), and thereby sanctifies (29 : 43 f.), as He himself has said of the temple, that His eyes and His heart were there. God institutes an *ordinance of atonement*, which is *principally* carried out in acts of worship *specifically expiatory*, but which also runs through the whole of the rest of the worship ; in all parts of which, but especially by the use which is made of the *blood* of the sacrifice at the burnt and thank-offerings, the idea is expressed that man may never *approach God without previous atonement*,—that this must be accomplished before he can expect that his *gift* will be favorably received by God. But it is not correct to call atonement the leading idea of Mosaic sacrifice in the sense that *every* offering is to be classed under this idea. It is rather the case that the *gift or offering*, in the strict sense,—that which really comes upon the altar,—*follows* on the completion of the atoning act. The right understanding of sacrifice depends essentially on the distinction between these two elements. O.

The SACRIFICIAL INSTITUTE is the very centre, and it is the Reason, and it is the Final Cause of the Mosaic Dispensation. It is this which connects the ancient Dispensation with the later Covenant, of which Christ himself was the centre. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says : "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and without shedding of blood is no remission ;" and thus, also, is it written : "Now once in the end of the world hath (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The Sacrificial Ritual which Moses, as a faithful servant, instituted in the wilderness, and which was enacted there

imperfectly during the forty years' wanderings, was afterward enacted in the conquered Palestine, so far as might be practicable under the precarious conditions of that unsettled time. Much more fully did it come into act in a later time ; and more fully, yet with necessary modifications, in the times of the Monarchy. But at length the sins of the people, and of their kings, brought this service to a pause. Nevertheless, at the very earliest moment of the return of the repentant people to their city, this shedding of the blood of victims was resumed ; and so was it continued until the last day of doom, when, while the city and the temple were in flames, the priests, still faithful to their duty, fell slain beside the altar, while accomplishing the last bloody sacrifice that should ever send its fumes heavenward. But neither the Roman conqueror, with his super-imposed temple of Venus, nor the levellings of the *Ælia Capitolina*, nor the basilicas of Christian emperors, nor the abortive endeavors of Julian, nor the massive works of the Saracen, nor the reparations of the Crusaders, nor of the Turk, have gone deep enough to disturb those colossal memorials of the remote age of the Monarchy, when the requirements of the Sacrificial Ritual prevailed over all other requirements, in fitting the sacred site for the worship instituted by Moses. And it is now the antiquarian curiosity of travellers and residents that is bringing these long-buried memorials to light. I. T.

It is hardly needful or possible here to point out in what manifold ways the various sacrifices of the Law foreshadowed the oblation of Calvary. It must suffice to say that this, too, was a voluntary offering (Heb. 9 : 14), a *whole* offering (Heb. 10 : 10) ; that the *life* was given (Matt. 20 : 28), and *blood* poured (1 Pet. 1 : 2) ; that the blood was poured for the remission of sins (Matt. 26 : 28), and the life given for the life of the world (John 6 : 51). It is for us to lay our hands on the head of Christ the sacrifice, and the analogy is complete. *Hammond*.—In Him now is found the appointed medium of intercourse between the sinner and God ; through Him, but through Him alone, can the sinner's guilt be atoned, and his services of faith and love rise with acceptance to the Father ; so that what purposes the altar served to the Old Testament worshipper, the same, and in a far higher manner, does Christ serve to the believer in the Gospel ; and the oneness of the appointed medium of sacrificial worship in former times has now also its counterpart in the one name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. All this implies, no doubt, the union of the Divine

and human in the person of Christ, His humiliation from the highest to the lowest condition, His vicarious intercession, and much besides ; but pre-indications of such specific points in the Christian scheme are to be sought in other parts of the tabernacle worship, rather than in the altar itself, which forms the common portal of them all. P. F.

As the altar sanctifies the gift, so doth Christ spiritualize our services for God's acceptance. All that we have from God streams through His blood ; so all we give to God ascends by virtue of His merits. All our worship, therefore, must be bottomed on Christ. The creatures present their acknowledgments to God by man, and man can only present his to God by Christ. It was utterly unlawful, after the building of the Temple, to sacrifice anywhere else : the Temple being a type of Christ, it is utterly unlawful for us to present our services in any other name than His. *Charnock*.—Having such an High-Priest to present our case, let us put our case with godly simplicity and filial confidence into His hands. Consider Him who is our High-Priest, and so be encouraged to send many supplications in. Send in requests *for yourself*, that your sin may be blotted out, and your heart renewed ; that your faith may be living, and your hope bright ; that your life may be His epistle, and your death His praise. *For your family*, that those who are bound so closely to you may be more closely bound to Him ; that you and yours may be heirs together of the grace of life, and dwell together with the Lord. *For the city*, that its Christians may be more like Christ, and its dead masses shaken and brought together, and clothed with skin, and raised to life, like the bones of Ezekiel's valley. *For the world*, that its tumults may be hushed at last, as the stormy sea became calm at the command of Jesus ; that all tongues and peoples may learn on earth the common hymn of heaven, "Worthy the Lamb that died." Having such an High-Priest in the heavens, why should we, by restraining prayer, leave Him, so far as we are concerned, standing there all the day idle ? *Arnot*.

The Altar of Incense.

The incense offered day by day, and century after century, prefigured the gracious *intercession of Christ*, that intercession through which alone our prayers are presented, which alone ensures their acceptance, and without which sinful man cannot draw near to God. When the high-priest entered the oracle, as the representative of the congregation, the cloud of incense must cover him lest he should die. We

have but to notice how close is the correspondence between type and antitype to be convinced that this is its true meaning. His prayers are like the fragrant incense. In Him the Father is well pleased. And they are ordained of God. He is the "Anointed," the "Advocate with the Father," "the one Mediator." He stands "before the throne," "at the right hand of God," "in heaven itself." He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." The incense never dies out of the heavenly courts. When we pray, morning and evening, our Intercessor prays also. When we offer our sacrifices, He offers the incense at the same time. And He is also our High-Priest. When He passed through the heavens with His own blood to make atonement, the incense, to make intercession, was not forgotten. *Hammond*.—Here we see Christ engaged in His work above, receiving the prayers of His people into His censer; taking their requests all into His own hand; making them His own; laying them on Himself as their golden altar; adding to them the savor of His own merits, so that they shall not go alone, unaccompanied or unwelcome, into His Father's presence; but, rendered odorous by passing from and through Him, steeped as it were in His virtues, shall ascend up before God with a certainty of being heard and accepted there. They never fail to be heard; never miss their mark; the golden altar sanctifies their gifts; their prayers go up as a memorial before God; they never can be lost; they linger before the throne, and are at one time or other assuredly attended to by Him who sitteth above the mercy seat. *Falloon*.

So that both the altars of Judaism speak to us of Christ: the one of His death, the other of His "endless life;" the first of the "one offering," the second of the ceaseless intercession. And between them they shadowed forth the fullness and completeness of our salvation. "We have an Advocate with the Father"—this is the Gospel of the incense. "We have a great High-Priest"—this is the evangel of incense and sacrifice alike. *Hammond*.

The Ark and Its Mercy-seat.

Pre-eminent, in its position, its glory, and its significance above all the other splendid symbols of truth and duty before and within the temple, stood the ark and the mercy-seat. Placed in the inner Sanctuary, the Holiest or Holy of Holies, radiating a brightness which no human eye could endure, it symbolized the immediate presence of Jehovah and His worshipping Hosts, while it bore express testimony to Him as the Covenant-making and Covenant-

keeping God of grace. Within the Ark was deposited the Law; and upon it was the golden mercy-seat, which disclosed in type the covenanted grace of the Gospel. Over the mercy-seat and between the cherubim, abode the columned light of the Shekinah, the living yet not consuming flame, earth's most glorious token of the presence of the Infinite, Invisible Spirit. Upon the mercy-seat blood was sprinkled by the High-Priest once a year as a typical Atonement for the sins of the people, foreshadowing that great Atonement which Jesus the Son of God, the world's appointed High-Priest, afterward offered once for all. Through the mercy-seat was indicated the *fact* of access, and through its baptism of blood the *way*, in which the sinful soul could approach the presence and enter into the fellowship of God. This was the object for which the mercy-seat was originally appointed, that He might thus extend *His* sceptre of promised blessing to all who came with fervent, humble, penitent spirit. "There will I meet thee and I will commune with thee," are the gracious words of invitation to every such comer, at every coming. B.

All the time that the history of the Jews was going on, the mercy-seat and the cherubim that covered it were still witnessing to the children of Israel that God was in the midst of them. So the words, "There I will meet with thee," stood from generation to generation. The lessons of the New Testament take up all the words and lessons of the Old Testament, all that is written about the cherubim and the mercy-seat. They say, "All this is now, not for Israelites, but for men, for men in the farthest ends of the earth." If you turn to the last book of the Bible, you will find the Book of Genesis appearing again there, a nobler tree of life than that of the garden of Eden, which is not guarded by angels, but the fruit of which all are invited to taste. You will find the Book of Exodus again there. You will hear of the tabernacle of God being with men, and of His dwelling with them and being their God. You will find some of the latest words in the book those which have gone through the whole of it,—"*Worship God.*" Worship means that God is meeting us and drawing us to Himself, that He has sent His Spirit into the world and established His Church in the world for the very purpose of bringing all to Him. This is the message that the Bible has brought to men in past ages; this is the message that it brings to them now. *Maurice*.

The two tables of stone in the ark testified that God's kingdom was founded on immutable justice and righteousness. They testified to the

covenant of obligation. Oehlen calls them "the obligatory document of the covenant." They testified against Israel's sins and backslidings. Against all, but especially against rebellion and apostasy. This appears to be the special force of the expression "the testimony," "tables of testimony." The two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments are called "the testimony" because God did testify (1) His sovereign authority over Israel as His people ; (2) His selection of them as the guardians of His will and worship ; (3) displeasure in the event of their transgressing His laws. While on the people's part they testified, in accepting them, (1) their acknowledgment of God's right to rule over them ; (2) their submission to the authority of His law. *Jamieson*.—As a ground of justification they were to be forever out of sight—fulfilled in Him who is the sinner's only justification and resting-place before God—Jesus Christ. But they were put into the ark to be preserved—only to be more binding than ever upon Israel as their rule of life. *Whitefield*.

The New Testament Epistles introduce two typical uses of the Temple itself, each of which is of vital interest.

1. The believer is a temple wherein the Holy Ghost dwells. No other conception is so lofty, so elevating, none so completely matches our utmost aspirations. Not only God *with us*, preparing, appointing, insuring all desirable good, but God *in us abiding*, to give light to our understanding that we may perceive truth and duty, to stir all pure, true impulses of the heart, and to actuate the will with the constraint of a Divine love ; God *in us* to impart all needed grace for every actual contingency, so that all experiences within the soul may work together for good, in conjunction with all events without. In this lofty estimate of man's possible aspirations, this figure transcends all human conception. For it embodies our life with the life of God. It actualizes all that we can desire or hope for, now and hereafter. It signifies light to the understanding for the apprehension of truth, and quickening to conscience for the commanding sense of duty. It means might to the will for the subjection of evil to good in actual living. And it intimates grace overflowing the heart, reproducing therein the deep, pure impulses and blessed outflow of Divine love. To be, then, thus rightly and blessedly self-elevated, to have humility deepened, and glad gratitude made more intense and constant, above all to live under the power of the strongest impulse to purity and truth, we may well

ponder often and deeply this sublimest of all the realities of personal experience, "*Ye are the temple of God !*"

2. Further, in the New Testament this truth is expanded into a second and broader typical use. All believers are included as *living stones* (in each of which God lives) in a glorious spiritual edifice, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Concerning this spiritual temple, yet in process of erection, when at length it shall be completed, "a great voice out of heaven" will be heard saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." No other temple than this, of redeemed, blood-washed souls, *all of whom are kings and priests* unto God, is found in the new Jerusalem ; and of these we read that the Lamb is the light and the joy everlastingly !

3. And the *practical* point of this now visioned and promised reality is this : In the upbuilding of this yet incomplete spiritual temple, this Church which is "for a habitation of God through the Spirit," each of us has the high, priceless privilege of contributing service of heart, of word and deed. It may be in *measure* larger or smaller according to ability and opportunity, but with the encouraging *knowledge* that if singly, heartily done, the small becomes great, even the greatest. In this service many have wrought and toiled, and now rest from their labors. Upon us, as yet living workers with God, is the privilege and duty fallen. And to all of us the fact is unutterably significant and solemn that we are building for eternity, either that which shall endure for our endless gratitude and joy, or that which includes ourselves in its everlasting destruction. For every man's work shall be made manifest. And it is the "*glory of the Lord*" that shall make manifest. This it is that at the last shall forever shine as the light within the heavenly city ; while it shall burn as a flame amid the darkness without, for "our God is a consuming fire !" B.

O God, thou hast built a temple unto thyself in us. We are not only, through thy grace, living stones in thy temple, but living temples in thy Sion. Do thou ever dwell in this thy house ; and in this thy house, let us ever serve thee. Wherefore else hast thou a temple, but for thy presence with us, and for our worshipping of thee ? Let the altars of our clean hearts send up ever to thee the sweetest perfumed smokes

of our holy meditations and faithful prayers and cheerful thanksgivings. Let the pure lights of our faith and godly conversation shine ever before thee and men, and never be put out. Let the bread of life stand ever ready upon the pure and precious tables of our hearts. Lock up thy law and thy manna within us ; and speak comfortably to us from thy mercy-seat. Suffer nothing to enter in hither that is unclean. Sanctify us unto thyself, and be thou sanctified in us. *Bp. H.*

The preparation, the construction, and the consecration of the Christian Temple, are all of Christ. He gathers the lively stones, and by the Spirit builds up His Church as a habitation of God through the Spirit, a sublime Temple, against which no inroad of enemies, or gates of Hades, shall prevail. D. F.—No base thing goes to the making up of God's house. If Satan may have a dwelling, he cares not though he patch it up of the rubbish of stone, or rotten sticks, or dross of metals ; God will admit of nothing that is not pure and exquisite ; his Church consists of none but the faithful ; his habitation is in no heart but the gracious. . . . What is the temple of this body of ours to the temple of Christ's body, which is his Church ? And what is the temple of God's Church on earth to that which triumpheth gloriously in heaven ? How easily do we see all these in this one visible temple ! which as it had three distinctions of rooms—the Porch, the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies—so is each of them answered spiritually : in the Porch, we find the regenerate soul entering into the blessed society of the Church ; in the Holy Place the Communion of the true, visible Church on earth, selected from the world ; in the Holy of Holies, whereinto the high-priest entered once a year, the glorious Heaven into which our true high-priest, Christ Jesus, entered once for all, to make an atonement betwixt God and man. *Bp. H.*

Here the living stones are cut and wounded, and made fit by sufferings for a temple unto God in the New Jerusalem. But as in the building of Solomon's temple, the noise of a hammer was not heard, for all the parts were framed before with that exact design and correspondence, that they firmly combined together ; they were hewn in another place, and nothing remained but the putting them one upon another, and then as sacred they became inviolable ; so God, the wise architect, having prepared the saints here by many cutting afflictions, places them in the eternal building, where no voice of sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable assembly above, is

there any eye that weeps, any breast that sighs, any tongue that complains, or any appearance of grief ? The heavenly state is called life, as only worthy of that title. There is no infirmity of body, no poverty, no disgrace, no treachery of friends, no persecution of enemies. " There is no more death, nor sorrow ; nor shall there be any more pain ; for former things are passed away. God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people." *Bates.*

The temple was designed to be the habitation of God, the seat of his presence, and a monument to his name. And the heavenly temple is erected for the same purpose ; not so much for the sake of the living and shining stones that compose it, as for the honor of its great Builder ; not so much for the salvation of the poor outcasts of the earth, as for the glory of the power, wisdom, and grace, of the great God of heaven. " Not for your sakes do I this," said the Lord God to Israel, even of the temporal deliverances he vouchsafed them, " but for mine holy name's sake." " This people," he says of his redeemed, " have I formed for myself ; they shall show forth my praise." " He hath chosen us," says Paul, " that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"—for what end ? " to the praise of the glory of his grace." And this truth is full of unspeakable comfort to the Christian heart. It would be sweet to live in heaven as the angels live there, happy in the sight of God, and rejoicing in his love ; but when I enter heaven, I shall stand there as a monument to my Redeemer's honor. To be a pardoned sinner on earth is a mercy so great that it sometimes overpowers me ; but to be a pardoned sinner in heaven, to afford a fresh revenue of glory to its great King in his own house—this is a mercy which passes all my thought ! *Bradley.*

The temple and the tabernacle were the same in their purpose and in their typical significance, and both were only transitory, even as and because they were typical. But as compared the one with the other, the temple may well become to us an illustration of the enduring nature of that building of God, the house not made with hands, which shall be His people's eternal habitation ; while the tabernacle, built on purpose so that it might quickly be taken down, reminds us of that earthly house—that frail body in which now we dwell—the pilgrim tent pitched in the wilderness, and in which the immortal soul is but as a stranger and a sojourner. So the Apostle Peter speaks of his mortal frame, and his language teaches us how truly he regarded it but as the temporary abode of him-

self, the spiritual inhabitant. "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." So, too, the Apostle Paul discourses of the tabernacle of the body : " We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." *Downton.*

Significance of the Entire Ritual System to the Thoughtful Israelite.

The numerous and diversified offerings of the ancient Jews, with the striking pomp which preceded and attended them, were fitted not only to excite and express the most reverential, humble, and grateful devotion, but also to give the best direction to the whole temper and conduct. The many washings and purifications enjoined previous to the oblation of sacrifice directly tended to impress a simple people with a scrupulous regard to inward and moral purity, especially in all their approaches to the Deity. Above all, the frequent sacrifices of the Jewish law were intended to prefigure and gradually to prepare men for the great atoning sacrifice of the coming Messiah. Accordingly, our Saviour, in allusion to those ancient oblations, is called by way of eminence a sin-offering, a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. In a word, the religion of the Jews and that of Christians form one great and harmonious plan. The Jews saw gospel truth in its early and gradual dawn, we behold it in its meridian splendor. When Christ appeared, the candid and pious Jews embraced Him, because they saw in Him a glorious counterpart, a perfect accomplishment, of their ancient rites and predictions. The Gentiles, on the other hand, were led to venerate and believe in the Hebrew law, because they beheld in it an exact though imperfect figure and prophecy of the gospel. What beauty and glory do these observations reflect both on the Jewish and Christian dispensations ! What admirable depths of wisdom do they discover in both ! *Bannister.*

The pious Israelite would be able to see that by obedience to the several prescriptions of the law, it was possible to some extent to offer acceptable sacrifices to God. The Sanctuary, the priesthood, and the sacrificial rubric would be understood to be Divine replies to the spiritual cravings of his soul. In the Sanctuary he would recognize the place where the Most High would meet his people under prescribed conditions and with assured results. In the priest-

hood he would behold the chosen ministers of God, at once the flower of the religious life of his nation and the pledge of his personal religious destiny. In the wide range of purification and sacrifices he would acknowledge a diversified series of religious services adapted to arouse and satisfy all the necessities of his spirit. In the several festivals he would see that Jehovah had provided for many a pause in his secular life, when in blended humiliation and rejoicing he might call upon the name of the Lord, and mingle his voice with the national abasement or exaltation. All these rites and ceremonies had been revealed to him as a detailed series of sacraments, which, weak as they were through materialism, yet brought heaven to earth, and transported man to the dwelling-place of God. Nor could he miss the significance of these injunctions ; for that significance was directly revealed in the Law itself, and rendered peculiarly impressive by an elaborate and eloquent symbolism. *Cave.*

It is untrue to speak of the Mosaic law as a failure, because it never realized its high expectations. Then as now it was a high privilege for God's people to have a noble idea of faith and duty set before them, and in all the worthier members of the nation there was a continual striving to reach the high standard proposed. R. P. S.—Undoubtedly the realization was but rarely attained, and that not in the entire nation, but in the sanctified heart of some solitary worshipper like David or Ezekiel. Nevertheless, these Divine object-lessons were not without their value. They were at once an exercise and an embodiment of an indispensable form of educational religion. They were admirably qualified for a paternal education of a religious childhood, if they fell short of a personal culture of a religious manhood. Add the further truth, so clearly taught in the old covenant, of the preparatory character of Judaism, and this divinely given cultus by presentation and atonement was blessed and stimulating indeed, "a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." *Cave.*

The Jew found himself from his birth a member of a very peculiar institution. In this institution the Church and the State were one, and every Jew was by birthright a member of the former no less than of the latter. Jehovah, the God of the whole earth, was the political head of the Jewish State, enacted laws for its government, and enforced the observance of them by temporal sanctions. While thus brought into peculiarly close and privileged intimacy with the Most High, the Jew was never

permitted to forget the immense distance which separated him from God, nor the fact of his continual unworthiness and uncleanness in the sight of Him who is Holy. Though Israel was a priestly nation, no individual could approach unto God save through the medium of an official priesthood, appointed by God, and solemnly consecrated to his service. Continual purifications were required even in cases where no moral impurity was necessarily contracted, and when offences of an open kind were committed, it was only by offering sacrifice that they could be remitted. Sacrifice had also to be presented to clear away the guilt of offences not detected or inadvertently committed; and to cover all and to protect the nation from the Divine displeasure, a great annual act of expiation had to be performed, so as to free the community from its sins. There was thus a continual remembrance of sins made, so as to keep before the minds of the people an abiding consciousness, at once of their own proneness to transgression, and of God's hatred of sin and jealousy of his own glory. Only by sins being continually purged away could Israel retain God's presence in their sanctuary, and avert his wrath from them and their land. *Brit. Quar.*

As the Jew regarded the sacred structure of the Temple, the eye whispered to the soul that God Most High dwelt in the midst of His nation, and might be approached in worship. As his attention was engrossed by the gorgeous vestments and busy ministrations of priests and Levites, he would recognize a divinely appointed organization, by whose mediation and intercession Divine worship might be beneficially conducted. The divinely arranged series of animal and bloodless gifts would deliver the messages with which they were divinely laden, the welcome and inspiring messages of the forgiveness of sins and a possibility of fellowship with

God. In short, the Mosaic injunctions, in their essential significance, brought into satisfactory prominence the consolatory and instructive truths of the Divine nearness and approachableness, of human sin in its stupendous effects upon the physical nature and the conscience, together with the possibility of atonement, forgiveness, and restoration to the Divine favor. The Jew who could devoutly say, "I believe in Jehovah, Maker of heaven and earth," could add to his creed, "I believe in the Shekinah, the Tabernacle and priesthood, the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins"—no inconsiderable spiritual equipment! *Cave.*

The simplicity of worship in the Christian Church is a sign of spiritual advancement, inasmuch as it arises, in some measure, from the fact, *that the gospel rites are commemorative, while those of the former dispensation were anticipative.* To the Hebrew in ancient times Christ was a Being of whose person and character and work he had but the most vague and undefined conceptions; to the Christian worshipper He is no shadowy dream of the future, no vague and visionary personage of a distant age, but the dearest, most intimate, best beloved of friends, whose beautiful life stands forth before the mind with all the distinctness of history—whose glorious person and mission is the treasured and familiar contemplation of his secret thoughts. The former, accordingly, needed all the elaborate formality of type and ceremony, of temple and altar and sacrifice—of symbolic persons and objects and actions, to help out his idea of the Messiah and of His mighty mission. But to enable the latter to recall his Lord, no more is required than a few drops of water, a bit of broken bread, or a cup of wine. Around these simplest outward memorials, a host of thoughts, reflections, remembrances, are ready to gather. *Caird.*

Section 291.

JEHOVAH'S ANSWER TO THE PRAYER OF SOLOMON.

1 KINGS 9 : 1-9. 2 CHRONICLES 7 : 11-22.

1 K. 9 : 1 AND it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do (that the LORD [or, for the LORD had] appeared to Solomon the second time, as he

2 Chron. 7 : 11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house : and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected. (And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and

3 had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the
 LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer
 and thy supplication, that thou hast made
 before me : I have hallowed this house,
 which thou hast built, to put my name there
 forever ; and mine eyes and mine heart
 4 shall be there perpetually. And as for thee,
 if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy
 father walked, in integrity of heart, and in
 uprightness, to do according to all that I
 have commanded thee, and wilt keep my
 5 statutes and my judgments ; then I will es-
 tablish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel
 forever ; according as I promised to David
 thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a
 6 man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye
 shall turn away from following me, ye or
 your children, and not keep my command-
 ments and my statutes which I have set be-
 fore you, but shall go and serve other gods,
 7 and worship them : then will I cut off Israel
 out of the land which I have given them ;
 and this house, which I have hallowed for
 my name, will I cast out of my sight ; and
 Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among
 8 all peoples : and though this house be so
 high, yet shall every one that passeth by it
 be astonished, and shall hiss ; and they shall
 say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this
 9 land, and to this house ? And they shall
 answer, Because they forsook the LORD their
 God, which brought forth their fathers out
 of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other
 gods, and worshipped them, and served
 them : therefore hath the LORD brought all
 this evil upon them).

said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and
 have chosen this place to myself for an house
 13 of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there
 be no rain, or if I command the locust to
 devour the land, or if I send pestilence
 14 among my people ; if my people, which
 are called by my name, shall humble them-
 selves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn
 from their wicked ways ; then will I hear
 from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and
 15 will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall
 be open, and mine ears attent, unto the
 16 prayer that is made in this place. For now
 have I chosen and hallowed this house, that
 my name may be there forever : and mine
 eyes and mine heart shall be there per-
 17 petually. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk
 before me as David thy father walked, and do
 according to all that I have commanded thee,
 and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments ;
 18 then I will establish the throne of thy king-
 dom, according as I covenanted with David
 thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee
 19 a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn
 away, and forsake my statutes and my com-
 mandments which I have set before you, and
 shall go and serve other gods, and worship
 20 them : then will I pluck them up by the
 roots out of my land which I have given
 them ; and this house, which I have hallowed
 for my name, will I cast out of my sight,
 and I will make it a proverb and a byword
 21 among all peoples. And this house, which
 is so high, every one that passeth by it shall
 be astonished, and shall say, Why hath the
 LORD done thus unto this land, and to this
 22 house ? And they shall answer, Because
 they forsook the LORD, the God of their
 fathers, which brought them forth out of the
 land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and
 worshipped them, and served them : there-
 fore hath he brought all this evil upon them.)

NOTE.—The chronological order of events and the orderly sequence of topics in this and the five succeeding sections have been carefully studied and considered. The only *real difficulty*, however, occurs precisely at this point, and is found in the apparently specific statement (1 K. 9 : 1), that the answer of Jehovah to the prayer of Solomon was given *after* the building of Solomon's palace, which was not until thirteen years had elapsed from the dedication of the Temple and the utterance of the prayer. Such long delay seems to be, on every account, incredible. For the solution of the difficulty, therefore, we must look to the structure of the narrative itself. The following statements (by Keil and Edersheim) present a sufficient explanation of the peculiar form in which the text is couched, and furnish adequate relief, if not complete solution, of the difficulty. The *point* of these statements lies in their judgment that the passage included in 1 K. 9 : 2-9, and 2 Chron. 7 : 12-22 (that is, Jehovah's answer to Solomon's prayer) should be regarded as an historical reference to a past occurrence, interposed at this point as now suggested to the narrator's thought. The passage should, therefore, be considered as a parenthesis in the narrative. B.

The second appearance which was made to Solomon, seems, according to verse 1, to have taken place at least thirteen years after the dedication of the temple. But this is inconceivable, as this manifestation contains the special answer to the prayer uttered by Solomon at the dedication. Verse 1 forms the transition from the prayer of Solomon to the answer of God, for which reason it is, in 2 Chron. 7 : 11, the closing formula to the section on the dedication of the temple ; but in Kings this transition sentence is made at the same time the superscription of the following section, in which he records Solomon's gift of cities to Hiram and his completion of all his buildings. This superscription, however, is couched in such a manner, that it forms at the same time the introduction to the Divine appearance, and is, therefore, after this has been communicated, partly repeated in 1 K. 9 : 10 as introductory to that which took place after the twenty years, in which Solomon had executed the building of the temple and his palace. The error that the Divine answer to the prayer of Solomon followed thirteen years after, arose merely from misunderstanding this general determination of the first verse. The time of the Divine appearance, accordingly, is not definitely stated in our narrative, but it may be determined with tolerable certainty from the words : "The second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon" (1 K. 9 : 2). As God appeared to Solomon at Gibeon in the night following his sacrifice, so also here probably in the night (2 Chron. 7 : 12), after the prayer of dedication and the sacrifice. The Divine promise to hear his prayer adheres closely in its terms to the prayer of Solomon ; the narrative in Kings gives only a summary, while it is more fully stated (2 Chron. 7 : 12-16). *Keil.*

The sacred text (1 K. 7 : 1-12) records the building of Solomon's palace immediately after that of the Temple, and, indeed, almost intermingles the two accounts. This may partly have been due to a very natural desire on the part of the writer not to break the continuity of the account of Solomon's great buildings, the more so as they were all completed by the aid of Tyrian workmen, and under the supervision of Hiram. But another and more important consideration may also have influenced the arrangement of the narrative. For, as has been suggested, these two great undertakings of Solomon bore a close relation to each other. It was not an ordinary Sanctuary, nor was it an ordinary royal residence which Solomon reared. The building of the Temple marked that the preparatory period of Israel's unsettledness had passed, when God had

walked with them "in tent and tabernacle"—or, in other words, that the Theocracy had attained not only fixedness, but its highest point, when God would set "His Name forever" in its chosen centre. But this new stage of the Theocracy was connected with the establishment of a firm and settled kingdom in Israel, when He would "establish the throne of that kingdom forever" (compare 2 S. 7 : 5-16). Thus the dwelling of God in His Temple and that of Solomon in his house were events between which there was deep internal connection, even as between the final establishment of the Theocracy and that of David's royal line in Israel. And this might well be marked, even by the conjunction of these two buildings in the Scripture narrative. A. E.

The dream of Gibeon repeated : the Lord appearing to Solomon the second time. Both our histories narrate this second appearance, the author of Chronicles most fully, but only the author of Kings compares it specially with the dream at Gibeon. It followed the dedication of the temple, and was manifestly designed to deepen moral impressions, and perhaps to warn specially against spiritual dangers already foreshadowed. In substance the Lord said—I have heard thy prayer in the dedication of this temple, and have accepted it. If now thou wilt walk before me with perfect heart as thy father David did, the throne of thy kingdom over Israel shall be established forever : but if thou turn aside after other gods, then will I cut off Israel from this glorious land of promise, and this consecrated temple shall be no protection against retributive judgments, for its ruin shall be as signal as its magnificence is now glorious. Oh, had these words of warning been duly remembered and diligently regarded ! H. C.

We have here both the absolute and the conditional in the promises of God for Israel—the one in the terms of the Abrahamic, the other in the terms of the Sinaitic covenant. God has put his name, and that forever, on Jerusalem, and his eyes and his heart shall be there perpetually—a promise which neither the law nor the actual disobedience of the Israelites to the law can possibly disannul. Had they proved faithful to God there would have been no casting off—no expulsion of them from the inheritance which they had gotten—no desolation of their land, or destruction of their magnificent temple. But all these inflictions have come upon them because they have sinned ; and for many centuries have the Jews been a hissing and a byword to all people. But the time of their repentance and restoration is coming,

when they shall prove what God said to Abram—They should be a blessing to all the families of the earth. T. C.

1 K. 9 : 2. The Lord had appeared.

This appearance was, like the former one at Gibeon, most probably made in a supernatural vision, and on the night immediately following the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 7 : 12). The strain of it corresponds to this view, for it consists of direct answers to his solemn inaugural prayer (verse 3 is in answer to ch. 8 : 29 ; verses 4, 5 are in answer to ch. 8 : 25, 26 ; verses 6-9 to ch. 8 : 33-46). Jamieson.

3. I have heard thy prayer. This could not have been the form of God's message, if thirteen years had passed away since the dedication. God's way is rather that spoken of by Is. 65 : 24, "While they are yet speaking I will hear." The LXX. adds after the first clause of this verse, "I have done for thee according to all thy prayer."

Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there. As in the former vision at Gibeon, God had given more than Solomon asked, so it is here. The prayer was that God's eyes might be open toward the house ; the promise is that His heart shall be there perpetually. This verse is largely expanded in 2 Chron. 7. Lumby.

I have hallowed this house. God assures Solomon of his special presence in the temple he had built, in answer to the prayer he had made. Solomon had dedicated it, but it was God's prerogative to hallow it, to sanctify or consecrate it ; men cannot make a place holy, yet what we, in sincerity, devote to God, we may hope he will graciously accept of, as his ; and *his eyes and his heart shall be upon it*. Apply it to persons—the living temples ; those whom God hallows or sanctifies, whom he sets apart for himself, have his eye, his heart, his love and care, and this perpetually. H.

3-5. God's faithfulness is seen (1) *in the answering of the prayer*—"I have heard thy prayer." The vision was itself an instant and very gracious Divine response. All true prayer is heard. No pure breath of supplication, the incense of the heart, ever ascends to Heaven in vain. God does not disappoint the hopes and longings He has Himself awakened. Every cry of filial faith that goes up to the great Father of all comes back in due time in some form of heavenly benediction. And more, the answer is often far larger and richer than our expectations. He "doeth exceeding abundantly." (2) *In the repetition of the promise*, "If thou wilt walk before me," etc. (verses 4, 5). The promise is reiterated as a sacred and inviolable en-

gagement which God on His part will never break. "The sure mercies of David." All Divine promises are sure. We have but to place ourselves in the line of their fulfilment and all is well with us. They are steadfast as the ordinances of heaven and earth. Waile.

2 Chron. 7 : 12-20. He promised to own this house for a *house of sacrifice to Israel*, and a *house of prayer for all people* (Is. 56 : 7 ; verses 12, 16), *My name shall be there forever*—that is, "There will I make myself known, and there will I be called upon." He promised to answer the prayers of his people, that should at any time be made in that place (verses 13-15). National judgments are here supposed (verse 13) ; famine and pestilence. By the locusts devouring the land may be meant enemies as greedy as locusts, and laying all waste. National repentance, prayer, and reformation, are required (verse 14). God expects that his people, who are called by his name, if they have dishonored his name by their iniquity, should honor it by accepting the punishment of their iniquity. They must humble themselves under his hand, must pray for the removal of the judgment, must seek the face and favor of God ; and yet all this will not do, unless they turn from their wicked ways, and return to the God from whom they have revolted. National mercy is then promised ; that God will forgive their sin, which brought the judgment upon them, and then heal their land, redress all their grievances. Pardoning mercy makes way for healing mercy. He promised to perpetuate Solomon's kingdom, upon condition that he persevered in his duty (verses 17, 18). If he hoped for the benefit of God's covenant with David, he must imitate the example of David. But he sets before him death as well as life, the curse as well as the blessing. He supposes it possible that though they had this temple built to the honor of God, yet they might be drawn aside to worship other gods (verse 19). He knew their proneness to backslide into that sin. He threatens it as certain, that if they did so, it would certainly be the ruin of both Church and State. It would be the ruin of their State (verse 20). "Though they have taken deep root, and taken root long, in this good land, yet I will pluck them up by the roots, extirpate the whole nation, pluck them up as men pluck up weeds out of their garden, which are thrown to the dunghill." It would be the ruin of their church. This sanctuary would be no sanctuary to them, to protect them from the judgments of God, as they imagined, saying, *The temple of the Lord are we* (Jer. 7 : 4). "This house which is high, not only for the magnificence of

its structure, but for the designed ends and uses of it, shall be an astonishment; it shall come down wonderfully (Lam. 1 : 9), to the amazement of all the neighbors." H.

Here is a solemn note of warning, the presage of that guilty apostasy by which the Jewish people became in after years the most signal example to men and nations of the waywardness of human nature and the retributive justice of God. We are reminded that the faithfulness of God has a dark as well as a bright side to it. As the cloud that guided the march of the Israelites out of Egypt was light to them, but a source of blinding confusion and miserable discomfort to their adversaries, so this and every other attribute of God bears a different aspect toward us according to the relation in which we stand to it, the side on which we place ourselves. Be true to Him, and every perfection of His being is a joy to you, a guide, a glory, a defence; forsake Him, and they become at once ministers of vengeance. Even His love, in its infinite rectitude and purity, dooms you to the penalty from which there can be no escape. Whether in the physical or the spiritual realms, one feature of the very beneficence of God's laws is that they must avenge themselves. Learn here (1) *that all human loss and misery spring from forsaking God.* "If ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children," then shall all these woes come upon you. All sin is a departure from the living God. Every sinful life is a more or less intentional and deliberate renunciation of God, and its natural results are shame, and degradation, and death. (2) *That according to the height of privilege so is the depth of the condemnation when that privilege is abused.* The very height of the "hallowed house" shall make the ruin the more conspicuous and the more terrible. There is no heavier judgment that God pronounces upon men than when He says, "I will curse thy blessings." The best things are capable of the worst abuse. And when the highest sanctities of life are violated they become the worst grounds of reproach and sources of bitterness. The greater the elevation, the deeper and more dreadful the fall. *Waite.*

19-22. How literally have these words been fulfilled! What an evidence of the truth of God the history of Israel supplies! "A proverb and a byword"—eighteen centuries at least testify to the truth of these words. "Cast out of my

sight;" let the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem explain to us these words. And there is not a country of Europe, there is hardly a city, in which the history of the Jew is not traced in blood, written within and without in "mourning and lamentation and woe." Claudius expelled them from Rome (Acts 18 : 2); our Edward I. drove them out of Guienne and England. What a commentary, too, is the Jews' "place of wailing" on this Scripture! The "holy and beautiful house" a desolation, the temple precincts trodden under foot of the Gentiles! Conqueror after conqueror, pilgrim after pilgrim, has asked the question, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus?" etc., while the "ever-extending miles of gravestones and the ever-lengthening pavement of tombs and sepulchres" answer, "Because they have forsaken the Lord their God." *Hammond.*

Quite apart from its religious significance, there is no other historical phenomenon that is to be compared for a moment in interest with this ever-growing wonder of the Jewish race. The light falls clearly and steadily on its history from first to last. To understand how strange a phenomenon is the indomitable vitality of this race, a race now without a home or a country, compare their history with that of the numberless tribes of other races who have been either migratory or settled. Excepting the Arabs, also Abraham's descendants, all the other settled contemporary races around Palestine have either died out completely, as the ancient people of Tyre, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt; or, if migratory, they have been lost and absorbed after a few centuries. The bond that has held the Jews apart from other nations, and yet together, has been their common religion, their common historical glory. When all Eastern Asia held evil to be incurable and eternal, the race of Abraham held that evil was "but for a moment," and that God's goodness and justice alone were eternal; and it is they who have taught this lesson to the nations of the modern world. But the honor of being the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the world for four thousand years, has been paid for by four thousand years of national martyrdom and humiliation. The terrific penalties announced at the beginning for failure in their national vocation amid the great nations of the ancient world, have been exacted to the letter. *E. White.*

Section 292.

BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S PALACE. VARIOUS STRUCTURES INCLUDED IN IT.
SOLOMON'S REGARD TO THE ORDINANCES OF WORSHIP.

1 KINGS 3 : 1-3 ; 7 : 1-12 ; 9 : 24, 25. 2 CHRONICLES 8 : 11-16.

1 K. 7 : 1 AND Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. For he built the house of the forest of Lebanon ; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. And it was covered with cedar above over the forty and five beams, that were upon the pillars ; fifteen in a row. And there were prospects in three rows, and light was over against light in three ranks. And all the doors and posts were square in prospect : and light was over against light in three ranks. And he made the porch of pillars ; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits ; and a porch before them ; and pillars and thick beams before them. And he made the porch of the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment : and it was covered with cedar from floor to floor. And his house where he might dwell, the other court within the porch, was of the like work. He made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, (whom Solomon had taken to wife,) like unto this porch. All these were of costly stones, even of hewn stone, according to measure, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside unto the great court. And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. And above were costly stones, even hewn stone, according to measure, and cedar wood. And the great court round about had three rows of hewn stone, and a row of cedar beams ; like as the inner court of the house of the LORD, and the porch of the house.

1 K. 3 : 1 And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. Only the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father : only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

2 Chron. 8 : 11 And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her : for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch, even as the duty of every day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts, three times in the year, *even* in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. And he appointed, according to the ordinance of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise, and to minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required : the doorkeepers also by their courses at every gate : for so had David the man of God commanded. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was perfected.

1 K. 9 : 25 Then did he build Millo. And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, burning incense therewith, *upon the altar* that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

The order in Solomon's buildings is observable : God's house first, for religion ; then his own, for his own convenience ; then a house for his wife, to which she removed, as soon as it	was ready for her (verse 24) ; then Millo, the Townhouse, or Guildhall ; then the wall of Jerusalem, the royal city ; then some cities of note and strength in the country, which were
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decayed and unfortified, Hazor, Megiddo, etc. H.

Building of Solomon's House.

1 K. 7 : 1. The thirteen years, according to 9 : 10, are to be reckoned from the completion of the temple. With verse 2 begins the description of this building. In what follows several buildings, as the house of the forest of Lebanon (2-5), the portico of pillars with a porch (6), the porch of the throne and of judgment (7), the dwelling-house of the king, and the house of the daughter of Pharaoh, were erected one after another. The question arises, whether all these buildings were different parts of one royal palace, or different buildings from it. The forest house of Lebanon cannot be a building different from the royal palace mentioned (verse 1), for this reason, that afterward (9 : 1, 10, 15 ; comp. 10 : 12) only one palace is always named among the buildings executed by Solomon, and here so large an account is given of this Lebanon house, while it has no further mention in the following chapters. Still more decisive, however, is the relation of the first verse of the chapter to the following. Verse 1 is a mere superscription ; with verse 2 begins the account of the erection of the building mentioned in verse 1 ; to be rendered, "he built, namely." It necessarily follows from this that the collective buildings mentioned in verses 2-8 formed only the one royal palace, the several departments of which are described in succession, whereupon the section is concluded with a statement of the materials employed in the building (verses 9-12). But even after the unity of the building has been agreed upon, it is extremely difficult to draw an outline of the entire palace that will be intelligible and in conformity with the statements of the text. *Keil.*

Location of the Palace. Without referring to the various buildings which Solomon reared, it may be safely asserted that the city must have rapidly increased in population. Indeed, during the prosperous reign of Solomon it probably attained as large, if not larger, proportions than at any time before the Exile. The wealthier part of the population occupied the western terraces of the west hill—the Upper City—the streets running north and south. The eastern slopes of the west hill were covered by "the middle city" (2 K. 20 : 4, marginal rendering). It will have been noticed, that as yet only the southern parts of both the eastern and western hills of Jerusalem had been built over. King Solomon reared the Temple on Mount Moriah, which formed the northern slope of the eastern hill, while the increase of the population soon

led to building operations on the side of the western hill opposite to it. Here the city extended beyond the old wall, north of "the middle city," occupying the northern part of the Tyropœon. This was "the other" or "second part of the city" (2 K. 22 : 14 ; 2 Chron. 34 : 22 ; Neh. 11 : 9, the "maktesh" or "mortar" of Zeph. 1 : 11). Here was the real business quarter, with its markets, "fishgate," "sheepgate," and bazaars, such as the "Baker Street" (Jer. 37 : 21), the quarters of the goldsmiths and other merchants (Neh. 3 : 8, 32), the "valley of the cheesemongers," etc. This suburb must have been soon enclosed by a wall. We do not know when or by whom the latter was commenced, but we have notices of its partial destruction (2 K. 14 : 13 ; 2 Chron. 25 : 23), and of its repair (2 Chron. 32 : 5). The particulars thus described will sufficiently explain the *location* of the great palace which Solomon built during the thirteen years after the completion of the Temple. Its site was the eastern terrace of the western hill, probably the same as that afterward occupied by the palace of the Asmonæans (Maccabees) and of Agrippa II. The area covered by this magnificent building was four times that of the Holy House (not including its courts). It stood right over against the Temple. A descent led from the Palace into the Tyropœon, and thence a special magnificent "ascent" (2 Chron. 9 : 4) to the royal entrance (2 K. 16 : 18), probably at the southwestern angle of the Temple. The site was happily chosen—protected by Fort Millo, and looking out upon the Temple-Mount, while south of it stretched the wealthy quarter of the city. Ascending from the Tyropœon, one would pass through a kind of ante-building into a porch, and thence into a splendid colonnade. This colonnade connected "the house of the forest of Lebanon," so called from the costly cedars used in its construction, with "the porch for the throne," where Solomon pronounced judgment (1 K. 7 : 6, 7). Finally, there was in the inner court, still further west, "the house where Solomon dwelt," and "the house for Pharaoh's daughter," with, of course, the necessary side and outbuildings (1 K. 7 : 8). Thus, the royal palace really consisted of three separate buildings. Externally it was simply of "costly stones" (verse 9), the beauty of its design only appearing in its interior. Here the building extended along three sides. The ground-floor consisted of colonnades of costly cedar, the beams being fastened into the outer walls. These colonnades would be hung with tapestry, so as to be capable of being formed into apartments.

Above these rose, on each side of the court, three tiers or chambers, fifteen on each tier, with large windows looking out upon each other. Here were the State apartments for court feasts, and in them were kept, among other precious things, the golden targets and shields (1 K. 10 : 16, 17). Passing through another colonnade, one would next reach the grand Judgment and Audience-halls, with the magnificent throne of ivory, described in 1 K. 10 : 18-20; 2 Chron. 9 : 17-19. And, lastly, the innermost court contained the royal dwellings themselves. A. E.

1 K. 7 : 1-12. The description is conformable to the arrangement of Eastern palaces. The building stood in the middle of a great oblong square, which was surrounded by an enclosing wall, against which the houses and offices of those attached to the court were built. The building itself was oblong, consisting of two square courts, flanking a large oblong hall which formed the centre, and which, being 100 cubits long, by 50 broad, was properly the house of the forest of Lebanon, being the part where were the cedar pillars of this hall. In front was the porch of judgment, which was appropriated to the transaction of public business. On the one side of this great hall was the king's house ; and on the other the harem or royal apartments for Pharaoh's daughter (Esther 2 : 3, 9). This arrangement of the palace accords with the Oriental style of building, according to which a great mansion always consists of three divisions, or separate houses--all connected by doors and passages--the men dwelling at one extremity, the female portion of the family at the other, while public rooms occupy the central part of the building. *Jamieson.*

The principal building situated within the Palace was, as in all Eastern palaces, the great hall of state and audience, here called the "House of the Forest of Lebanon." Its dimensions were 100 cubits, or 150 feet long, by half that, or 75 feet in width. Next in importance is the hall or porch of judgment, which Josephus distinctly tells us was situated opposite to the centre of the longer side of the great hall. Its dimensions were 50 cubits, or 75 feet square (Josephus says 30 in one direction, at least), and its disposition can easily be understood by comparing the descriptions we have with the remains of the Assyrian and Persian examples. It must have been supported by four pillars in the centre, and had three entrances--the principal opening from the street and facing the judgment-seat ; a second from the court-yard of the Palace, by which the councillors and officers of state might come in ; and a third from the

Palace, reserved for the sole entrance of the king and his household. The third edifice is merely called "the Porch." Its dimensions were 50 by 30 cubits, or 75 feet by 45. It was an indispensable adjunct to an Eastern palace. It was the ordinary place of business of the palace, and the reception-room where the king received ordinary visitors, and sat, except on great state occasions, to transact the business of the kingdom. Behind this, we are told, was the inner court, adorned with gardens and fountains, and surrounded by cloisters for shade ; and besides this were other courts for the residence of the attendants and guards, and in Solomon's case, for the three hundred women of his harem. Apart from this palace, but attached, as Josephus tells us, to the Hall of Judgment, was the palace of Pharaoh's daughter. The recent discoveries at Nineveh have enabled us to understand many of the architectural details of this palace, which were before almost wholly inexplicable. We are told--*e.g.*, that the walls of the halls of the palace were wainscoted with three tiers of stone, apparently versicolored marbles, hewn and polished, and surmounted by a fourth course, elaborately carved with representations of leafage and flowers. Above this the walls were plastered and ornamented with colored arabesques. At Nineveh the walls were, like these, wainscoted to a height of about eight feet, but with alabaster, a peculiar product of the country, and these were separated from the painted space above by an architectural band ; the real difference being that the Assyrians revelled in sculptural representations of men and animals. These modes of decoration were forbidden to the Jews by the Second Commandment. *Dic. B.*

The new Palace was built on massive substructions of enormous stones, carefully hewn, and was enclosed within a large court. It included several edifices within itself. The chief was a long hall, which, like the Temple, was encased in cedar ; whence, probably, its name, "the House of the Forest of Lebanon." In front of it ran a pillared portico. Between this portico and the palace itself was a cedar porch,--sometimes called the Tower of David. In this tower, apparently hung over the walls outside, were a thousand golden shields, which gave the whole palace the name of the Armory. With a splendor that outshone any like fortress, the tower with these golden targets glittered far off in the sunshine like the tall neck, as it was thought, of a beautiful bride, decked out after the manner of the East, with strings of golden coins. Five hundred of them were made by

Solomon's orders for the royal guard, but the most interesting were the older five hundred, which David had carried off in his Syrian wars from the guard of Hadadezer, as trophies of arms and ornaments, in which the Syrians specially excelled. It was these which, being regarded as spoils won in a sacred cause, gave, in all probability, occasion to the expression: "The shields of the earth belong unto God" (Ps. 47 : 9). This porch was the gem and centre of the whole Empire; and was so much thought of that a smaller likeness to it was erected in another part of the royal precinct for the Queen. Within the porch itself was to be seen the King in state. On a throne of ivory, brought from Africa or India, the throne of many an Arabian legend, the Kings of Judah were solemnly seated on the day of their accession. From its lofty seat, and under that high gateway, Solomon and his successors after him delivered their solemn judgments. That "porch" or "gate of justice" still kept alive the likeness of the old patriarchal custom of sitting in judgment at the gate; exactly as the Gate of Justice still recalls it to us at Granada and the Sublime Porte—"the Lofty Gate" at Constantinople. He sat on the back of a golden bull, its head turned over its shoulder, probably the ox or bull of Ephraim; under his feet, on each side of the steps, were six golden lions, probably the lions of Judah. This was "the seat of judgment." This was "the throne of the House of David." *Stanley.*

The appearance of this grand hall and of the Porch of the Throne, when the king dispensed justice or received ambassadors from his gold and ivory chair of state, must have been imposing. His 500 guards, standing round with their golden shields, inspired respect and awe, if litigants brought their suits before him, or tributary states presented their tokens of homage. Between two and three centuries after Solomon, Isaiah the prophet refers to the House of the Forest of Lebanon as the arsenal of the kingdom of Judah (Is. 22 : 8). *Sime.*—Even the imaginations of the Oriental romancers and poets have scarcely conceived a more splendid pageant than Solomon, seated on his throne of ivory, receiving the homage of distant princes who came to admire his magnificence, and put to the test his noted wisdom. This throne was of pure ivory, covered with gold; six steps led up to the seat, and on each side of the steps were twelve lions carved. All the vessels of his palace were of pure gold, silver was thought too mean: his armory was furnished with gold; 200 targets and 300 shields of beaten gold were suspended in the house of Lebanon. *Milman.*

1 K. 3 : 1. Pharaoh king of Egypt.

This is the first notice since the Exodus of any connection of Israel with Egypt. It is impossible to decide with certainty which Pharaoh it was whose daughter Solomon took to wife. The twenty-second Egyptian dynasty commenced with Sheshonk I. (the Shishak of the Bible), about B.C. 990. This monarch did much to advance the Egyptian power, which under the previous Tanite sovereigns of the twenty-first dynasty had sunk very low. We shall find Shishak (1 K. 11 : 40) receiving Jeroboam when he fled from Solomon. The wife of Solomon must therefore have been a daughter of a king in the previous dynasty, the kings of which would be likely to welcome an alliance with so powerful a monarch. Pharaoh is used in the Bible as the royal title of the Egyptian kings, and not as the proper name of any single person. This wife of Solomon probably embraced Judaism, as we find no reproach against him for this marriage, nor is any Egyptian deity mentioned among those for whom Solomon at a later time built high places when strange women turned away his heart after other gods. *Lumby.*—This marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh—to which, from its frequent mention, so much political importance seems to have been attached—took place in the first years of his reign, although some time after the building of the Temple and of his own palace had commenced. Such a union was not forbidden by the law, nor was the daughter of Pharaoh apparently implicated in the charge brought against Solomon's other foreign wives of having led him into idolatry (1 K. 11 : 1-7). In fact, according to Jewish tradition, the daughter of Pharaoh actually became a Jewish proselyte. Still, Solomon seems to have felt the incongruity of bringing her into the palace of David, within the bounds of which "the Ark of the Lord" appears to have been located (2 Chron. 8 : 11), and she occupied a temporary abode "in the City of David," till the new palace of Solomon was ready for her reception. *A. E.*

1 K. 3 : 3. Solomon began well. He "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father," and almost his first care is to accomplish the desire, inherited from his father, of building "the house of the Lord," for which David had long since been collecting materials. But even at this early date, when all seems so fair, the germs of evil are not wanting. There is something astounding in finding that one of his first acts was to seek a wife out of Egypt, the house of bondage. Since the Israelites "spoiled the Egyptians" there had been no in-

tercourse between the two nations. Solomon's marriage was probably a diplomatic one, to gain the aid of Pharaoh against Edom, or at least to withhold him from helping Edom. It was the beginning of those many unions with strange wives who in the end led him into abominable idolatries. But he is nowhere said to have built altars to any Egyptian god, so that we may conclude that Pharaoh's daughter became a proselyte, and that for this reason the marriage was not specially condemned. But the connection with Egypt, if it did not lead to idolatry, led to another violation of the law. In direct contravention of De. 17 : 17, Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt (1 K. 10 : 28). *Plummer.*

2 Chron. 8 : 12-15. After the building of the temple and of his own house, Solomon continued for a time faithful to the worship and

legislation of his people. For the first twenty-four years of his reign there was no change in the principles with which he set out in public life. *Sime.*

1 K. 9 : 25. *Three times in a year* he offered burnt-offerings extraordinary : namely, at the three yearly feasts, the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles, in honor of the Divine institution ; beside what he offered at other times, both statedly, and upon special occasions. With his sacrifices he burned incense, not himself (that was King Uzziah's crime), but the priest for him, at his charge, and for his particular use. It is said, he offered *on the altar which he himself built*. He took care to build it, and then himself made use of it. Many will assist the devotions of others that neglect their own. *H.*

Section 293.

CITIES BUILT BY SOLOMON. HIS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS, ECCLESIASTICAL, MILITARY, AND CIVIL. HIS CHARIOTS, HORSEMEN, AND HORSES.

1 KINGS 4 : 1-19, 22, 23, 26-28 ; 9 : 10-23 ; 10 : 26, 28, 29. 2 CHRONICLES 1 : 14, 16, 17 ; 8 : 1-10 ; 9 : 25, 28.

1 K. 9 : 10 AND it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house, (now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him ; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother ? And he called them the Land of Cabul, unto this day. And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

2 Chron. 8 : 1 And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD, and his own house, that the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. 3, 4 And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it. And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars ; and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

1 K. 9 : 15 And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised ; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a portion unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether, and Baalath, and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. As for all the people that were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and

21 the Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel ; their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy, of them did
22 Solomon raise a levy of bondservants, unto this day. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondservants : but they were the men of war, and his servants, and his princes,
23 and his captains, and rulers of his chariots and of his horsemen. These were the chief officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

1 K. 4 : 1, 2 And king Solomon was king over all Israel. And these were the princes
3 which he had ; Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest ; Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of
4 Shisha, scribes ; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder ; and Benaiah the son of Je-
5 hoiada was over the host ; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests ; and Azariah the son of
Nathan was over the officers ; and Zabud the son of Nathan was priest, *and* the king's friend ;
6 and Ahishar was over the household ; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the levy.
7 And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his
8 household : each man had to make provision for a month in the year. And these are their
9 names : Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim : Ben-deker, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and
10 Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan : Ben-hesed, in Arubboth ; to him *pertained* Socoh, and
11 all the land of Hepher : Ben-abinadab, in all the height of Dor ; he had Taphath the daughter
12 of Solomon to wife : Baana the son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean
which is beside Zarethan, beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, as far as beyond
13 Jokmeam : Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead ; to him *pertained* the towns of Jair the son of Man-
asseh, which are in Gilead ; *even* to him *pertained* the region of Argob, which is in Bashan,
14 threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars : Ahinadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim :
15, 16 Ahimaaz, in Naphtali ; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon to wife : Baana the
17, 18 son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth : Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar : Shimei
19 the son of Ela, in Benjamin : Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon
king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan ; and *he was* the only officer which was in the
22 land. And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore
23 measures of meal ; ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep,
beside harts, and gazelles, and roebucks, and fatted fowl.

2 Chron. 1 : 14 And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen : and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

1 K. 4 : 26, 27 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's
28 table, every man in his month : they let nothing be lacking. Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

2 Chron. 1 : 16 And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt ; the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price. And they fetched up, and brought out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty : and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

Solomon's buildings and undertakings. So far the historian has spoken exclusively of the two greatest works of Solomon's reign, the Temple and the Palace, and principally of the former. Even the message just related was, as we have seen, the response to the prayer offered when the temple was consecrated. But he now proceeds to mention other proofs of Solomon's greatness, and of the prosperity of his reign—doubtless because the glory of Israel then reached its climax, and the author would be tempted to linger over these details because of the dark contrast which his own time supplied

—and this leads him to speak of the means by which all these enterprises were accomplished. The particulars here given are but fragmentary, and are grouped together in a somewhat irregular manner. It would seem as if both this account and that of the chronicler had been compiled from much more copious histories, each writer having cited those particulars which appeared to him to be the most interesting and important. But the design of the historian in either case is evident—viz., to recount the principal undertakings of this illustrious king, and to indicate the resources which enabled him

to accomplish such extensive designs. *Hammond.*

1 K. 9 : 10-13. The great works connected with the establishment of God's house, and of his own royal state at Jerusalem, to which city they added an entirely new quarter, occupied the first half of Solomon's reign, a period of twenty years, 1015-996 B.C. The services of the King of Tyre were acknowledged by the cession of twenty cities along the sea-coast of Galilee, a gift at which Hiram expressed his discontent by a play upon the name of one of them, *Cabul*, a word signifying *dirt* in the Phœnician dialect. P. S.—It appears that, besides furnishing him with wood, Hiram had also advanced gold to Solomon (verse 11), amounting, if we may connect with this the notice in verse 14, to 120 talents of gold. We suppose it was in repayment of this sum that Solomon ceded to Hiram twenty cities in Northern Galilee, adjoining the possessions of Tyre. With these he might the more readily part, since the district was partially "Gentile." But Hiram, who probably coveted a strip of land along the coast, was dissatisfied with his new acquisition, and gave it the contemptuous designation of "the land of Cabul." The district seems, however, to have been afterward restored to Solomon, no doubt on repayment of the loan and other compensation. (See next paragraph of text, 2 Chron. 8 : 1, 2.)

2 Chron. 8 : 3-6 ; 1 K. 9 : 15-26. The great Palace, the Temple, and the enlargement of Millo and of the city wall, were not the only architectural undertakings of King Solomon. Remembering that there were watchful foes on all sides, he either built or repaired a number of strong places. In the north, as defence against Syria, rose the ancient stronghold of Hazer. The plain of Jezreel, the traditional battle-field of, as well as the highway into Palestine from the west and the north, was protected by Megiddo ; while the southern approach from Egypt and the Philistine plain was guarded by Gezer, which Pharaoh had before this taken from the Canaanites and burned, but afterward given to his daughter as dowry on her marriage with Solomon. Not far from Gezer, and serving a similar defensive purpose, rose the fortress of Baalath, in the possession of Dan. The eastern and northeastern parts of Solomon's dominions were protected by Tamar or Tadmor, probably the Palmyra of the ancients, and by Hamath-Zobah, while access to Jerusalem and irruptions from the northwestern plain were barred by the fortification of Upper and Nether Bethhoron. Besides these fortresses, the king provided magazine-cities, and others where his

chariots and cavalry were stationed—most of them, probably, toward the north. In all such undertakings Solomon employed the forced labor of the descendants of the ancient Canaanite inhabitants of Palestine, his Jewish subjects being chiefly engaged as overseers and officers in various departments. But even thus, the diversion of so much labor and the taxation which his undertakings must have involved were felt as a "grievous service" and "heavy yoke" (1 K. 12 : 4), all the more that Solomon's love of building and of Oriental splendor seems to have rapidly grown upon him. Thus, once more by a natural process of causation, the inner decay marked by luxury led to the weakening of the kingdom of Solomon, and scattered the seeds of that disaffection which, in the days of his degenerate son, ripened into open rebellion. So true is it, that in the history of Israel the inner and the outer always keep pace. A. E.

16. The mention of Gezer leads to a parenthesis of considerable length (verses 16-19). The question of the levy is put aside for the time, while the historian explains how it was that the king came to build Gezer. He then proceeds to mention the other towns built during the same reign. *Hammond.*

In the north and northeast, Hamath, which apparently had thrown off the yoke on David's death, was recovered. Fortresses were established along the heights of Lebanon, and stations along the desert toward the Euphrates. Of these establishments two remain, which, partly by tradition, partly by resemblance of name, are connected with Solomon. One is Baalbec or *Baalath* (verse 17) ; the great sanctuary, which commanded the valley of Coelesyria, on the way to Hamath, and of which the enormous substructions appear to date from an age far anterior to the Syro-Greek or Syro-Roman temples built upon them. Eastward his dominion extended to Thapsacus, and on the way to this is the other probable memorial of his greatness, "Tadmor in the wilderness ;" if we may trust the native name which has clung to the famous city of Zenobia, in spite of its Roman appellation, by which it has been translated. Its situation, in what must then have been a palm-grove, at the point where the wide, barren valley, enclosed between two parallel ranges of hills, opens on the still wider desert, and where the abundant springs gather round it a circle of vegetation, would naturally have pointed it out to Solomon as a site for a city, and a halting-place for caravans half-way between Damascus and Babylon. *Stanley.*

2 Chron. 8 : 4. Tadmor in the wil-

derness. There is no reasonable doubt that this city, said to have been built by Solomon, is the same as Palmyra. The identity of the two cities is thus established: Josephus mentions the same city as bearing in his time the name of Tadmor among the Syrians, and Palmyra among the Greeks; and Jerome translates Tadmor by *Palmyra*. The modern Arabic name of Palmyra is substantially the same as the Hebrew word, being *Tadmur* or *Tuthmur*. The word Tadmor has nearly the same meaning as Palmyra, signifying probably the *City of Palms*, from Heb. *tâmâr* = *a palm*. The name Tadmor or Tadmôr actually occurs as the name of the city in Aramaic and Greek inscriptions found there. In 2 Chron. 8, the city is mentioned as built by Solomon after his conquest of Hamath-Zobah, and is named with "all the store-cities which he built in Hamath." This accords fully with the situation of Palmyra; and there is no other known city, either in the desert or not in the desert, which can lay claim to the name of Tadmor. *Dic. B.*

As Solomon held the fortress of Thapsacus at the place where the caravans crossed the Euphrates, he could afford an escort of troops thence to Tadmor, and thence again to the western coast, if required; and for this, as well as for the aid and assistance at Tadmor, and for the advantages of its stores and khans, a toll might reasonably be required; and this would cheerfully be paid, as a return for actual benefits, and as a most gratifying exchange for the harassing, irregular, inordinate, and greedy exactions of the Arab tribes. But we apprehend that Tadmor was more than a watering and resting station; that it became under Solomon what we know it was in later times, an actual emporium for the products of the East, where the caravans terminated their journey, deposited their loadings, transacted their sales with the factors from the West, who then took charge of the commodities, and bore them away thence to the western markets at their leisure, or whither the dealers repaired to purchase such of those commodities as they required from the consignees. This is the usual mode in which the goods brought by distant caravans are disposed of in the East, almost always at some border town, and rarely at the ultimate market. More than this, we see little room to doubt that Solomon himself took up, by his agents, the greater part, if not the whole, of the goods thus brought into his territories, and kept them in his stores, eventually selling them at a profit to such of the western merchants as required them. This would, in fact, amount to a monopoly of the

Eastern trade. But such is the custom of Eastern kings when they take any interest in commercial undertakings. And not only so, but such royal merchants are very much in the habit of taking such commodities from the caravans *at their own price*, which the merchant dare not refuse to accept. This, however, has a *practical* limit, and must especially have had such in the case of Solomon, for the result might have been to direct the traffic into some other channel, which might have been found by crossing the Euphrates more to the north, and so proceeding westward. But this expensive and fatiguing course would not be adopted without more serious cause than so prudent a king as Solomon would be likely to give. That this, in substance, was the course taken by Solomon, seems to us to be proved by the fact, that it was really the policy on which he conducted his trade with Egypt; and from the fact that we read of "store cities" which he built, and as this is mentioned in connection with his building of Tadmor, it is obviously suggested that these towns were intended to be places for the deposit and sale of the products of this great eastern land trade—so ancient, so important—and which now seems to have been chiefly in the hands of Solomon. *Kil.*

Tadmor was a very famous city, known among the Greeks by the name of Palmyra, situated in the wilderness of Syria, on the borders of Arabia Deserta, inclining toward the Euphrates. Josephus places it two days' journey from Upper Syria, one day's journey from the Euphrates, and six days' journey from Babylon. If we may guess by the ruins which later travellers describe of this city, it was one of the finest and most magnificent in the East; and it is somewhat surprising that history should give us so little account when or by whom it was reduced to the sad condition in which it now appears. The reason of Solomon's building this city in so desolate a place, was probably the commodiousness of its situation, to cut off all commerce between the Syrians and Mesopotamians, and to prevent their caballing and conspiring against him, as they had done against his father David. *Stackhouse.*

From the earliest times there seems to have been some communication between Mesopotamia and other provinces on the banks of the Euphrates, and those parts of Syria and Palestine which lay near the Mediterranean. The migration of Abram from Ur of the Chaldees to Sichem in the land of Canaan, is an instance of this. The journey through the desert which separated these countries, was much facilitated

by its affording one station abounding with water and capable of cultivation. As the intercourse increased, the possession of this station became an object of so much importance, that Solomon, when he turned his attention toward the extension of commerce among his subjects, built a fenced city there. Its Syrian name of "Tadmor in the wilderness," and its Greek name of Palmyra, are both descriptive of its situation, in a spot adorned with palm-trees. This is not only plentifully supplied with water, but surrounded by a portion of fertile land which, though of no great extent, renders it a delightful habitation in the midst of barren sands and an inhospitable desert. Its happy position, at the distance, according to Major Rennell, of 85 miles from the Euphrates, and about 117 from the nearest coast of the Mediterranean, induced its inhabitants to enter with ardor into the trade of conveying commodities from one of these to the other. Its opulence and power increased rapidly; and, from the peculiar advantages of its situation, as well as the spirit of its inhabitants, it long maintained its independence, though surrounded by powerful and ambitious neighbors. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, some gentlemen of the English factory at Aleppo, incited by what they heard in the East concerning the wonderful ruins of Palmyra, ventured, notwithstanding the danger and fatigue of a journey through the desert, to visit them. To their astonishment they beheld a fertile spot of some miles in extent, arising like an island out of a vast plain of sand, covered with the remains of temples, porticoes, aqueducts, and other public works, which in magnificence and splendor, and some of them in elegance, were not unworthy of Athens or of Rome, in their most prosperous state. Palmyra owed its aggrandizement to the opulence acquired by extensive commerce. After its conquest by Aurelian trade never revived there. At present a few miserable huts of Arabs are scattered in the courts of its stately temples, or deform its elegant porticoes. *Dr. Robertson.*

It became a Roman colony under Caracalla (A.D. 211-217). Subsequently, in the reign of Gallienus, the Roman senate invested Odenathus, a senator of Palmyra, with the regal dignity, on account of his services in defeating Sapor, king of Persia. On the assassination of Odenathus, his celebrated wife Zenobia seems to have conceived the design of erecting Palmyra into an independent monarchy; and, in prosecution of this object, she, for a while, successfully resisted the Roman arms. She was at length defeated and taken captive by the Em-

peror Aurelian (A.D. 273). In 1172 Benjamin of Tudela found 4000 Jews there, and at a later period Abulfeda mentioned it as full of splendid ruins. The long lines of Corinthian columns at Palmyra, as seen at a distance, are peculiarly imposing; and in their general effect and apparent vastness they seem to surpass all other ruins of the same kind. The principal ruin is the great temple of the sun, the great colonnade supposed to have consisted of 1500 columns, and the tombs, which are tower-like buildings, two, three, or four stories high. *Dic. B.*

Neither Greece nor Italy could exhibit antiquities which in point of splendor could rival those of Palmyra. The examinations of travelers show that the ruins are of two kinds. The one class must have originated in very remote times, and consists of rude, unshapen hillocks of ruin and rubbish, covered with soil and herbage, such as now alone mark the site of the most ancient cities of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, and among which it would be reasonable to seek any traces of the more ancient city of Solomon. The other, to which the most gorgeous monuments belong, bears the impress of later ages. It is clear from the style of architecture that the later buildings belong to the three centuries preceding Diocletian, in which the Corinthian order of pillars was preferred to any other. *Kil. Enc.*

1 K. 9 : 19. There was another class of public works, which Solomon found it necessary to undertake. "Cities of store, cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen." The phrase, "store cities" or "temple cities," is borrowed from the Book of Exodus. What Pithom and Raamses were to Pharaoh, these store cities were to Solomon—at once magazines for the garrisons which held the fortresses of the empire; and warehouses, in which goods were stored, when they were purchased by the king's merchants, or received in consignment from abroad. Both ideas are involved in the words. And both meanings may be specially applicable to "all the store cities which he built in Hamath." *Sime.*

23. Five hundred and fifty. At 2 Chron. 8 : 10, the number is stated at 250. The most probable solution is, that there were 250 set over those who wrought in the temple; and the rest had the superintendence of public works in other places. *Bp. Patrick.*

1 K. 4 : 1-19. That this list belongs not to the beginning but to the later period of Solomon's reign, appears certain from the fact that two of the twelve officers were married to daughters of Solomon. The list appears accord-

ingly to contain a collection of the most distinguished officers of the kingdom during the whole of Solomon's reign, which is inserted here for substantial reasons to give an idea of the power and glory of the kingdom of Israel under Solomon. To this both the commencement and close of the chapter point. *Keil*.

The prosperity of Solomon's reign was commensurate with the fact that it was based upon the Divine promises, and typical of far greater blessings to come. The notices in 1 K. 4 and 5 are strung together to indicate that prosperity by presenting to our view the condition of the Israelitish monarchy in the high-day of its glory. Wise and respected councillors surrounded the king. The administration of the country was orderly, and the taxation not arbitrary but regulated. The land was divided, not according to the geographical boundaries of the "tribes," but according to population and resources, into twelve provinces, over each of which a governor was appointed. Among their number we find two sons-in-law of the king (verses 11, 15), and other names well known in the land. Had this policy of rearranging the country into provinces been sufficiently consolidated, many of the tribal jealousies would have ceased. On the other hand, the financial administration, intrusted to these governors, was of the simplest kind. Apparently, no direct taxes were levied, but all that was requisite for the royal court and government had to be provided, each province supplying in turn what was required for one month. Such a system could not, indeed, press heavily so long as the country continued prosperous; but with a luxurious court, in hard times, or under harsh governors, it might easily become an instrument of oppression and a source of discontent. From 1 K. 12 : 4 we gather that such was ultimately the case. It need scarcely be added, that in each province the supreme civil government was in the hands of these royal officials; and such was the general quiet prevailing, that even in the extensive district east of the Jordan, which bordered on so many turbulent tributary nations, "one sole officer" (verse 19) was sufficient to preserve the peace of the country. Quite in accordance with these notices are the references both to the prosperity of Israel and to the extent of Solomon's dominions. They almost read like an initial fulfilment of that promise to Abraham: "Multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." And if, compared with the simplicity of Saul's and even of

David's court, that of Solomon seems luxurious in its appointments, we must remember that it was intended to show the altered state of the Israelitish monarchy, and that even so the daily consumption was far smaller than at the court of the Persian monarchs in the high-day of their power and glory. *A. E.*

22, 23. The daily consumption of the royal household is now related to show the grandeur and luxury of the court. And it agreed well with the greatness of the kingdom. The lavish provision of Oriental palaces was evidently a subject of wonder and of boasting to the ancients, as the inscriptions and monuments show. *Hammond*.

2 Chron. 1 : 14. He established a new species of military force, strongly discouraged by the law of Moses, and from which all previous rulers of this people had abstained—that of chariots and horses. Of the former he had 1400, and of the latter 12,000. Apart even from the prohibition, this was an extreme and perilous extravagance for such a country as that over which this king reigned. The country was mountainous, and unsuited for cavalry. It was also a time of peace; and all the great victories of his father and other conquerors had been won in reliance upon the strength of the Lord's arm, without any such force, and over those who possessed it. However proper, such a number of horses and chariots was wholly disproportioned to so small a country; and it is likely that no act of royal extravagance was so unpopular among the people, under whose eyes it was continually present. This kind of expenditure, in the keeping of animals not for manifest use, is always more offensive to a people, and especially to an agricultural people, than any other form of expenditure, because it is a living expense. The people soon fall to reckoning that each horse consumes the food of so many persons, the produce of so much land; and when, to support such extravagance, they are oppressed with special burdens, the grievance becomes intolerable. We do not call to mind any deep popular complaint against the extravagance of a sovereign which had not its origin in some such form of living expenditure,—that is, in the really or apparently unprofitable maintenance of persons or animals—horses, servants, functionaries, soldiers, women. Indeed, a popular complaint against even a war will, when examined, generally resolve itself into a discontent at the cost of maintaining the army—of so many consumers of food not employed in reproductive labor. *Kit*.

1 K. 4 : 26. The numeral "forty" rests on

an old error in transcription for *four*, as the older expositors have observed. These chariots and saddle horses Solomon kept partly in Jerusalem, partly in several towns, which he pitched upon for this purpose. *Keil*.

From the coming out of Egypt to the end of David's reign, the people of Israel never suffered for want of force and strength in war. Troops, few in number, and seemingly unfit for action, supported neither by chariots nor by horsemen, proved an overmatch for royal armies. This may be verified in the instances of Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel, and of all others called forth by God to save his people. During this period, also, the kingdom of Israel was carried to its utmost height by David. He held the kings about him, how gallantly soever they and their troops were mounted, under tribute and subjection, though he himself rode on a mule, and provided no better equipage for his son on his coronation day. When David looked back and meditated on this state of things, he might well say, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the Lord our God " (Ps. 20 : 7). In the reign of Solomon things quickly changed. He married the daughter of the king of Egypt, and opened a commerce between that country and his own : and the next news we hear of him is, that he "had four thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." They who succeeded him followed his example ; and from his time the kings of Judah and Israel had, whenever they were able to keep them, a strength of chariots and horsemen. Let us now see what they got by this change : Solomon came to a kingdom firmly established, the princes round him were tributary to him, and those at a distance feared and admired him : but troubles soon overtook him : the Edomite on one side, the king of Damascus on the other, insulted him ; nor was he able, with all his new forces, to quell these upstart enemies. But the most remarkable event, and that which seems designed by Providence to humble the pride of Israel, was the division of the kingdom upon the death of Solomon, which produced a war of many years' continuance between Israel and Judah, wherein their forces were employed, with various success, in weakening and destroying one another. During this time the king of Egypt, the country which had furnished Solomon with all his horses, came up against Jerusalem, and took it, and carried away all the treasures of the temple, and of the royal palace, which had been long gathering by David and Solomon : and Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, became

servant to the king of Egypt (2 Chron. 12 : 8, 9). Thus did Solomon and his house prosper with their great strength of chariots and horses. Indeed, we may from this time date the ruin of Israel. *Bp. Sherlock*.

2 Chron. 1 : 16. Friendly intercourse began to be held under Solomon with Egypt. Nearly five hundred years had now elapsed from the Exodus, and during that long period there had been no intercourse between the two countries. Many memorable events had happened in Egypt during the interval. There had been revolutions in the throne,—“stranger-kings,” who had forcibly introduced the worship of the sun, and expelled the old Egyptian deities, but had not long maintained their dominion ; there had been times of grand conquests, when Egyptian arms subdued the greater part of Asia, and victorious Pharaohs—the Sethis and Rameses of their history—blazoned their great exploits in the glorious temples of Karnak and Luxor ; the arts had risen, some two hundred years after the Exodus, to the highest degree of excellence of which they were there capable, but had now begun somewhat to decline. Not only did Solomon marry a daughter of Pharaoh, but “he had horses brought out of Egypt. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for one hundred and fifty.” But this introduction of chariots and horses was in disobedience of the Divine command (De. 17 : 16). *W. G. B.*

2 Chron. 1 : 17. We are informed of the articles which Solomon imported from Egypt through his factors, but not of the commodities he gave in exchange. This, however, it is not difficult to discover, seeing that there are certain products of Palestine which were not produced, or not adequately produced, in Egypt, and which must in all times have found a welcome in the markets there. Of the staple productions of Palestine, corn was one that Egypt did not want ; but in regard to oil and wine the case was different. Of all oils, that of the olive is most valued, and the tree that afforded it did not flourish in Egypt, but was native to Palestine, and grew there to its utmost perfection, shooting even from the crevices of the rocks, where scarcely any soil appears. Hence “oil out of the flinty rock” (De. 32 : 13) was among the blessings of the land promised to the chosen people. So of wine. It is not true that the vine did not grow in Egypt, or that wine was not made there. This old notion is overset by the evidence of the mural paintings. Yet the nature of the climate—as unfavorable to the vine from heat as our own climate is from cold—shows

that it must there have been rather an object of amateur culture, than a natural and extensive production. The wine also, although made in some limited degree, was probably of inferior quality, and not greatly prized. But in Palestine the vine attained its perfection, affording excellent grapes, which yielded the finest wine.

This wine was prized even by the Phœnicians, who had access to the vines of Lebanon. Much more, therefore, must it have been valued by the Egyptians; and these two commodities, olive oil and wine, alone, must have afforded Solomon ample means of return for whatever he required. *Kit.*

Section 294.

IMMENSE REVENUE OF GOLD FROM COMMERCE WITH OPHIR AND TARSHISH.
FROM MERCHANTS AND FROM TRIBUTARY KINGS AND GOVERNORS. THE
MAGNIFICENCE OF SOLOMON'S COURT. HIS GREAT IVORY THRONE.

1 KINGS 9 : 26-28 ; 10 : 11, 12, 14-25, 27. 2 CHRONICLES 1 : 15 ; 8 : 17, 18 ; 9 : 10, 11, 13-24, 27.

1 K. 9 : 26 AND king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, 27 on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, 28 shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

2 Chron. 9 : 10 And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which 11 brought gold from Ophir, brought alnum trees and precious stones. And the king made of the alnum trees terraces for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, and harps and psalteries for the singers : and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah. 13 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore 14 and six talents of gold ; beside that which the chapmen and merchants brought : and all the 15 kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold : six hundred *shekel's* of beaten gold 16 went to one target. And *he made* three hundred shields of beaten gold ; three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield : and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. 17, 18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and 19 stays on either side by the place of the seat, and two lions standing beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps : there was not 20 the like made in any kingdom. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold : silver was nothing ac- 21 counted of in the days of Solomon. For the king had ships that went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram : once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and 22 silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in 23 riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear 24 his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate 27 year by year. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the lowland, for abundance.

1 K. 9 : 26. Ezion-geber. This place is mentioned first in the narrative of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt. It was the last halting-place before they entered the wilderness of Zin. It lay at the top of the gulf of Akabah. Here was also Eloth (*or* Elath) of which we read (2 K. 14 : 22) that, though it is here said to be in the land of Edom, it was conquered for Judah at a later time, and still later (2 K. 16 : 6) came into the possession of Rezin king of Syria. In reference to this navy, we are told (2 Chron. 8 : 18) that Hiram sent Solomon the ships. Putting that passage side by side with this, it can only mean that the wood

for ship-building was brought from Tyre along the coast as far as was necessary, and then at the nearest point carried over land to the Gulf of Akabah, where the ships were built. *Lumby.*

27. It was probably from the exhaustion of the ample means left by his father, and the inadequacy of the ordinary sources of revenue, for his vast expenses in sacred and regal building, as well as to sustain the great expense of his magnificent court and vast household, that Solomon was led to turn his attention to commerce. His intimate connection with the Phœnicians could not but indicate to his sagacious mind that commerce was the sole foundation of the extraordinary prosperity which that small nation had attained, and the great wealth which it possessed. He saw not why similar advantages might not accrue to himself from the like sources. But his people had no knowledge of the sea, or of ship-building; therefore he still proposed to act with the co-operation of Hiram. This co-operation was readily entered upon, and presently the port of Ezion-geber resounded with the strokes and cries of the multitude of wrights, busy in building such ships as those with which they navigated the length of the Mediterranean to Tarshish. The interest which Solomon felt in the enterprise may be judged of from the fact that he went in person to Ezion-geber to hasten the preparations, and to witness the departure of the fleet—a sight at all times beautiful, and altogether new to the eyes of a Hebrew king. *Kil.*

The chief foundation of riches to the Jews was the trade which they carried on by the Red Sea, to the coasts of Africa on the west, and also to those of Arabia, Persia, and India, on the east. King David was the first who began it; for, having conquered the kingdom of Edom, and reduced it to be a province of the empire (2 Sam. 8 : 14), he thereby became master of these seaports, Eloth and Ezion-geber, and seeing the advantage which might be made of these two places, he wisely took advantage of it, and there began the traffic. Solomon, not being perplexed with wars as his father David was, had greater leisure for commercial pursuits, and he much improved this trade, as well by his greater application to it as by his superior wisdom. For the better settling of it, he went to Eloth and Ezion-geber in person, and planted in these towns such inhabitants as might best be able to further his designs, bringing many from the sea-coasts of Palestine, and being furnished with Tyrians by Hiram, his friend and ally. Under the wise management of Solomon, this trade grew to such a pitch, that he drew to these

ports, and thence to Jerusalem, all the trade of Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India, which was the chief source of the immense wealth he acquired, and in which he surpassed all the kings of his time, as much as he did by his wisdom; so that he made silver to be at Jerusalem as the stones of the street, by reason of its great abundance there during his reign. *Prideaux.*

2 Chron. 9 : 11. Terraces for the house of the Lord. The noun signifies “a prop,” and it may be that some ornamental work like that indicated in the margin of the Revised Version “a railing” is intended. It was some later addition, not any part of the fabric, which was already completed. If we combine the two narratives it may be that what is intended is a staircase with handrail and balustrade. The former word would suit in Chronicles, where the Authorized Version has “stairs” on the margin, and the latter here. *Lumby.*—The text of the common English version has in the one place “pillars,” and in the other “terraces.” Perhaps the most probable signification is that given in the margin of the two passages—namely, here “rails” or balusters, and in Chronicles, “stairs.” **Harps and psalteries.** Stringed instruments, whose precise form cannot be accurately defined. They are spoken of together with, or without, additional instruments in Ps. 32 : 2 ; 71 : 22 ; Is. 5 : 12. W. H. G.

Ophir and Tarshish.

1 K. 9 : 28. 2 Chron. 9 : 10, 21.

It is agreed by all writers, that the trade carried on under Solomon was the same as that which is now in the hands of our East India merchants; yet there are great disputes among learned men, in what parts of the eastern world Ophir and Tarshish, the two places of resort mentioned in Scripture, lay. But we have no certain means of information; we have no account in Scripture of the situation of Ophir, or of the length of the voyage to it, only we are told that there were brought from it “gold, almug trees, and precious stones,” therefore, any place in the Southern or Indian oceans which could furnish these may be supposed to be the Ophir of Scripture. This, however, should be remarked, that if the southern part of Arabia furnished the world in those times with the best gold, and in the greatest quantity, as many authors affirm, those who assert Ophir to have been there situated, seem to have the best reason for their conjecture. *Dean Prideaux.*—*Ophir* is the name of the famous gold region,

also known as *Uphaz*, the El Dorado of biblical geography, so well known to fame, so imperfectly ascertained in fact. Its position has been variously assigned to the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, the northwestern coast of India, the island of Ceylon, Malacca in the Malay Peninsula, and the eastern coast of Africa. On the whole, while the gold, and even, perhaps, the almug-wood, may have been found in Arabia, as well as passed on therefrom in the way of commerce, the fact that the other objects mentioned were carried by the ships of Hiram and Solomon to Palestine does nothing to destroy the probability that the site of Ophir is to be placed on the sea-coast of that country, as they may have been brought there by sea, and embarked on board the ships, of which the chief freight consisted in its natural productions; nor does the statement that the "ships of Tarshish came once in three years" (verse 21) require us to believe that the voyage from Ezion-geber, Solomon's port on the Red Sea, to India occupied all that time (1 K. 9 : 26 ; 10 : 22). Herodotus, indeed, tells us that the fleet of discovery sent by Necho from the Red Sea occupied two years in sailing round Africa, but that the crews tarried on their voyage long enough in each year to sow the land and reap the crop. It is not likely that the trading voyage of Solomon's fleet, starting from nearly the same point, and bound to India, even if conducted on the most dilatory principle, could have occupied a whole year longer than the much longer one of Necho's scientific expedition. We may therefore receive the statement of the Book of Kings in its simply natural sense—viz., that, without inquiring into the length of each voyage, the fleets made their voyage to Ophir once in three years; probably they sailed farther than to Ophir, perhaps even as far as India or Ceylon; but the voyage derived its title from the place which was its principal station, Ophir, on the southeastern coast of the Arabian peninsula. *Wilson.*

Tarshish, as appears from the Scriptural accounts and allusions, was an old, celebrated, opulent, cultivated, commercial city, which carried on trade in the Mediterranean and with the seaports of Syria, especially Tyre and Joppa, and that it most probably lay on the extreme west of that sea. Was there, then, in ancient times any city in these parts which corresponded with these clearly ascertained facts? There was. Such was Tartessus in Spain, said to have been a Phœnician colony, a fact which of itself would account for its intimate connection with Palestine and the Biblical narratives. As to the

exact spot where Tartessus (so written originally) lay, authorities are not agreed, as the city had ceased to exist when geography began to receive attention; but it was not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, consequently at no great distance from the famous Granada of later days. The reader, however, must enlarge his notion beyond that of a mere city, which, how great soever, would scarcely correspond with the ideas of magnitude, affluence, and power that the Scriptures suggest. The name, which is of Phœnician origin, seems to denote the *district of Southwestern Spain*, comprising the several colonies which Tyre planted in that country, and so being equivalent to what we might designate Phœnician Spain. We seem authorized by considerations, besides those which have been already elicited, in identifying the Hebrew Tarshish with the Spanish Tartessus, whatever may have been the extent of the neighboring country over which the latter held dominion, or possessed immediate influence. Among these considerations we mention, first, that the two names are similar, if they are not the same; a fact which would of itself seem to settle the question, in the absence of conflicting evidence and claims; second, Spain was one of the chief seats of Phœnician colonization; and if we unite therewith the northwest of Africa, we shall have some idea of the greatness of the power of Tyre in these parts, for Tyre is reported to have founded not fewer than three hundred cities on the western coast of Africa, and two hundred in Southwestern Spain (Strabo 2 : 82). Here, then, was found the chief object of the Phœnician sea trade. These countries were to Tyre what Peru was to Spain. Confining our remarks to Spain, we learn from Heeren that the Phœnician colonies on the European side of the sea were situated in the south of the present Andalusia. Here, with other important places, lay Tartessus, a name which is borne by a river, an island, a town, and a region. Heeren distinctly says that to Orientalists the word indicated the farthest west generally, comprising, of course, many places. In the commercial geography of the Phœnicians, he adds, the word obviously meant the entire of their colonial dependencies in Southern Spain. In the same general way we use the term West Indies; and thus arose the river, the town, the district of Tartessus, since the country included them all. Third, it does much to confirm our view that all the articles reported in Jeremiah and Ezekiel to have been brought from Tarshish might have come from Southwestern Spain. Here there were mines of

gold and silver, and Tartessus is expressly named as affording the latter mineral (Strabo, Diod. Sic.). Tin was brought by the Phœnicians from Britain into Spain, and thence carried to the Oriental markets. According to Diodorus Siculus, tin was procured in Spain also, as well as lead, according to Pliny. Pliny's words are forcible: "Nearly all Spain abounds in the metals—lead, iron, copper, silver, gold." We add one or two corroborations. Heeren translates Ezek. 27 : 25, "The ships of Tarshish," etc., by "Spanish ships were the chief object of thy merchandise; thou (Tyre) wast a full city, and wast honored on the seas." The Phœnicians were as eager in their quest of gold and gold countries as were the alchemists and the Europeans of the sixteenth century. The lust for gold urged them over the deserts of Arabia and the cliffs of the Red Sea as far as Yemen and Ethiopia; and the same passion carried them westwardly to the coasts of Spain and the pillars of Hercules. "Spain," says Heeren, "was once the richest land in the world for silver; gold was found there in great abundance, and the baser metals as well. The silver mountains were in those parts which the Phœnicians comprised under the general name of Tartessus or Tarshish. The immeasurable affluence of precious metals which on their first arrival they found here, so astounded them, and the sight thereof so wrought on the imagination of the people, that fact called fable to its aid, and the story gained currency, that the first Phœnician colonists not only filled their ships with gold, but made thereof their various implements, anchors not excepted." *J. R. Beard.*

Commercial Relations of Solomon with Tyre and the Phœnician People.

To his relations with Tyre the whole record testifies. These relations were definitely and intensely commercial—bread-stuffs in exchange for building materials and skilled labor; besides the co-operative trade which Solomon and Hiram carried on jointly through their commercial navies and seafaring men across the great Mediterranean with Northwestern Africa and Southwestern Europe—in Hebrew phrase, "with Tarshish" and "ships of Tarshish." The imports of this trade were gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks." Moreover, having built Ezion-geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea for their port, they drove a very considerable trade with the southern coast region of Arabia and probably with India and Africa. The precise location of Ophir—the land of gold—is still an unsettled question, opinions being

divided between Arabia and India, with much to be said for either theory. The products of this traffic were gold (principally), yet also "almug (or algum) trees and precious stones." H. C.—The first branch of commerce into which this enterprising people either admitted the Jews as regular partners, or at least permitted them to share in its advantages, was the traffic of the Mediterranean. To every part of that sea the Phœnicians had pursued their discoveries; they had planted colonies, and worked the mines. This was the trade to Tarshish, so celebrated, that ships of Tarshish seem to have become the common name for large merchant vessels. Tarshish was probably a name as indefinite as the West Indies in early European navigation; properly speaking, it was the south of Spain, then rich in mines of gold and silver, the Peru of Tyrian adventure. Whether or not as early as the days of Solomon,—without doubt in the more flourishing period of Phœnicia; before the city on the mainland was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and insular Tyre became the emporium—the Phœnician navies extended their voyages beyond the pillars of Hercules, where they founded Cadiz. Northward they sailed along the coast of France to the British isles; southward along the African shore; where the boundaries of their navigation are quite uncertain, yet probably extended to the Gold Coast. The second branch of commerce was the inland trade with Egypt. This was carried on entirely by the Jews. Egypt supplied horses in vast numbers. The third, and more important branch, was the maritime trade by the Red Sea. The conquests of David had already made the Jews masters of the eastern branch of this gulf. Solomon built or improved the towns and ports of Elath and Ezion-geber. Hence a fleet, manned by Tyrians, sailed for Ophir, their East Indies, as Tarshish was their West. They sailed along the eastern coast of Africa, in some part of which the real Ophir was probably situated. The whole maritime commerce, with Eastern Asia, the southern shores of the Arabian peninsula, the coasts of the Persian gulf, and without doubt some parts of India, entered, in the same manner, the Red Sea, and was brought to Elath and Ezion-geber. Yet even this line of commerce was scarcely more valuable than the inland trade of the Arabian peninsula. This was carried on by the caravans of the native tribes, who transported on camels the spices, the incense, the gold, the precious stones, the valuable woods, particularly the almug, thought to be the sandal—and all the other highly-prized productions of that country; perhaps also the foreign com-

modities which were transported across the Persian gulf, or which were landed, by less adventurous traders from the east, in the Arabian ports on that sea. Both these lines of commerce flowed directly into the dominions of Solomon. Another line of commerce was that of inland Asia, which crossed from Assyria and Babylonia to Tyre. In order to participate in this branch of traffic, Solomon subdued part of the Syrian tribes, and built two cities as stations between the Euphrates and the coast. These were Tadmor and Baalath, one the celebrated Palmyra, the other Baal-bee. *Milman.*

2 Chron. 9 : 13. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year—666 talents, equal to £3,996,000. The sources whence this was derived are not mentioned ; nor was it the full amount of his revenue ; for this was “ besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.” The great attention he gave to commerce was the means of enriching his royal exchequer. By the fortifications which he erected in various parts of his kingdom, and particularly at such places as Thapsacus, one of the passages of Euphrates, and at Tadmor, in the Syrian desert, he gave complete security to the caravan trade from the depredations of the Arab marauders ; and it was reasonable that, in return for this protection, he should exact a certain toll or duty for the importation of foreign goods. A considerable revenue, too, would arise from the use of the store cities and khans he built ; and it is not improbable that those cities were emporia, where the caravan merchants unloaded their bales of spices and other commodities, and sold them to the king’s factors, who, according to the modern practice in the East, retailed them in the Western markets at a profit. “ The revenue derived from the tributary kings and from the governors of the country” must have consisted in the tribute which all inferior magistrates periodically bring to their sovereigns in the East, in the shape of presents of the produce of their respective provinces.

17–19. A great throne of ivory. It seems to have been made not of solid ivory, but veneered. It was in the form of an arm-chair, with a carved back. The ascent to it was by six steps, on each of which stood lions, in place of a railing—while a lion, probably of gilt metal, stood at each side, which, we may suppose from the analogy of other Oriental thrones, supported a canopy. A golden footstool is mentioned as attached to this throne, whose magnificence is

described as unrivalled. *Jamieson.* — We never read of ivory till about the time of Solomon, who, perhaps, brought elephants from India, or, at least, caused great quantities of ivory to be imported from thence. At this time it was as precious as gold : we must not suppose, therefore, that this throne of Solomon’s was entirely overlaid with gold, but only in particular places, that so the mixture of gold and ivory, which gave a lustre to each other, might make the throne look more beautiful. “ There was not the like made in any kingdom” (verse 19), of course the sacred writer means in those days. In after ages, we read that the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars beset with precious stones, and that the Persian kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones. This serves to illustrate the splendor of eastern monarchs. *Stackhouse.*

19. And twelve lions stood. An account is given by Sir Thomas Roe of a throne of the Mogul, much resembling this of Solomon : “ He hath at Agra a most glorious throne within his palace, the ascent to which is by divers steps, covered with plates of silver ; on the top of the ascent stand four lions, upon pedestals of marble, which lions are all of massy silver, in part gilt. These lions support a canopy of fine gold, under which the Mogul sits when he appears in his greatest state and glory.” *Fragments to Culmet.*

Summary of the Sources of Solomon’s Wealth.

The profound peace which the nation enjoyed as a fruit of David’s victories, stimulated the industry of all Israel. The tribes beyond the Jordan had become rich by the plunder of the Hagarenes, and had a wide district where their cattle might multiply to an indefinite extent. The agricultural tribes enjoyed a soil and climate in some parts eminently fruitful, and in all richly rewarding the toil of irrigation ; so that, in the security of peace, nothing more was wanted to develop the resources of the nation than markets for its various produce. In food for men and cattle, in timber and fruit trees, in stone, and probably in the useful metals, the land supplied of itself all the first wants of its people in abundance. For exportation, it is distinctly stated, that wheat, barley, oil, and wine were in chief demand ; to which we may conjecturally add, wool, hides, and other raw materials. The king undoubtedly had large districts and extensive herds of his own ; but besides this, he received presents *in kind* from his

own people and from the subject nations ; and it was possible in this way to make demands upon them, without severe oppression, to an extent that is unbearable where taxes must be paid in gold or silver. He was himself at once monarch and merchant ; and we may with much confidence infer, that no private merchant will be allowed to compete with a prince who has assumed the mercantile character. By his intimate commercial union with the Tyrians, he was put into the most favorable of all positions for disposing of his goods. That energetic nation, possessing so small a strip of territory, had much need of various raw produce for their own wants. Another large demand was made by them for the raw materials of manufactures, and for articles which they could with advantage sell again : and as they were able to furnish so many acceptable luxuries to the court of Solomon, a most active exchange soon commenced. Only second in importance to this, and superior in fame, was the commerce of the Red Sea, which could not have been successfully prosecuted without the aid of Tyrian enterprise and experience. The navigation to Sheba, and the districts beyond—whether of Eastern Arabia or of Africa—was highly lucrative, from the vast diversity of productions between the countries so exchanging ; while, as it was a trade of monopoly, a very disproportionate share of the whole gain fell to the carriers of the merchandise. The Egyptians were the only nation who might have been rivals in the southern maritime traffic ; but their religion and their exclusive principles did not favor sea-voyages ; and there is some reason to think that at this early period they abstained from sending their own people abroad for commerce. The goods brought back from the south were chiefly gold, precious stones, spice, almug or other scented woods, and ivory ; all of which were probably so abundant in their native regions as to be parted with on easy terms ; and, of course, were all admirably suited for re-exportation to Europe. The carrying trade, which was thus shared between Solomon and the Tyrians, was probably the most lucrative part of the southern and eastern commerce. How large a portion of it went on by caravans of camels, is wholly unknown ; yet that this branch was considerable, is certain. From Egypt Solomon imported horses and chariots, which were sold again to the princes of Syria and of the Hittites ; and were probably prized for the superior breed of the horses, and for the light, strong, and elegant structure of the chariots. Wine being abundant in Palestine, and wanting in Egypt, was no doubt a principal means of

repayment. Moreover, Solomon's fortifying of Tadmor (or Palmyra), and retention of Thapsacus on the Euphrates, show that he had an important interest in the direct land and river trade to Babylon ; although we have no details on this subject. *F. W. Newman.*

We must not suffer our eyes to be so dazzled by the magnificence of Solomon's commercial operations as to preclude ourselves from discerning the unsoundness of their principles, and the hollowness of the prosperity which they appeared to create. Although it may be, that no cause so directly contributes to the material prosperity of a nation as commerce—to insure that result, the commerce must be national, not regal. It must be the effect of the natural development of the nation's resources, or of the direction given to its tastes and habits. It must be in the hands of the people, open to all who can command the needful capital, or possess the required commodities—and so diffusing by numerous channels throughout the land its enlivening influence. Without this, commerce can have no really beneficial existence, and although it may gild the head of the State, it can impart no quickening life to its frame. Solomon, with all his wisdom, did not discern this. *Kit.*

It has been well observed (by Ewald) that there was a moment in Israel's history when it seemed possible that David might have laid the foundation of an empire like that of Rome, and another when Solomon might have led the way to a philosophy as sovereign as that of Greece. But it was an equally, if not more dangerous path on which to enter, and one even more opposed to the Divine purpose concerning Israel, when foreign trade, and with it foreign luxury, became the object of king and people. The danger was only too real, and the public display appeared in what the Queen of Sheba saw of Solomon's court, in the magnificence of his throne, and in the sumptuousness of all his appointments. Two hundred large targets and three hundred smaller shields, all covered with beaten gold, hung around the house of the forest of Lebanon ; all the king's drinking vessels, and all the other appurtenances for State receptions were of pure gold ; the merchants brought the spices of the East into the country ; while traders, importers, and vassal chiefs swelled the immense revenue, which in one year rose to the almost incredible sum of 666 talents of gold, which at the lowest computation amounts to upward of two and a half millions of our money, or only one million less than that of the Persian kings. Add to this the number of Solomon's

chariots and horsemen, the general wealth of the country, and the importation of horses from Egypt, which made Palestine almost an emporium for chariots and horses ; and it will not be difficult to perceive on what a giddy height king and people stood during the later years of Solomon's reign. It was this scene of wealth and magnificence, unexampled even in the East, as well as the undisputed political influence and supremacy of the king, combined with the highest intellectual activity and civilization in the country, which so much astounded the Queen of Sheba on her visit to Solomon's dominions. A. E.

From these and other details, summarized in these chapters of Solomon's career, we get certain impressions which are only deepened as we reach the conclusion of that career. The *first* respects the just estimate of Solomon's character and of the fruits of his life. Apart from his choice of wisdom in the comparison of other earthly gifts, and from his participation in occasional public worship, there is little indication of personal fellowship with God, or personal consecration to Him. So in the acts of his protracted reign, apart from his excellent work in the building of the Temple, there is no one of the manifold and notable products of his reign that seems to have been instigated by a higher consideration than personal or national glory. The burden of his sad strain in "The words of the Preacher," and the prevalent tone of the Proverbs, strongly confirm this impres-

sion of Solomon's character and life. Only in the faithful transcription of these wisest and deepest of practical truths, whose substance was inwrought into his experience and made clearer by a supernatural insight, only in this, his great work for God and man, do we find that which in some measure redeems an otherwise pre-eminently wasted though supremely gifted life. And this leads us to the second impression, perhaps the *great* lesson suggested by this life. It is the wonderful long-suffering and positive forbearance of God as shown in his dealing with Solomon. It is the same lesson disclosed in every previous life-history, but nowhere, perhaps, so signally as here. With Saul, God forbore only for a season, after his disobedience. With David's transgressions he dealt at once and sorely. But for long years, and even to the end, He forebore with Solomon. With no other human soul did the promises of Jehovah seem to have such force in holding back His hand from merited chastisement. And the lesson is deeply impressive, as illustrating God's tenderness of affection, His depth of patience, and His faithfulness to promise ! B.

Solomon got much by his merchandise, and yet has directed us to a better trade, within reach of the poorest, having assured us, from his own experience of both, that the *merchandise of Wisdom is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold* (Prov. 3 : 14). H.

Section 295.

SOLOMON'S EXCEEDING WISDOM. VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

1 KINGS 4 : 29-34 ; 10 : 1-10, 13. 2 CHRONICLES 9 : 1-9, 12.

1 K. 4 : 29 AND God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men ; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol : and his fame was in all the nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs : and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

1 K. 10 : 1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem

with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones : and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions : there was not anything hid from the king which he 4 told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the 5 house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he 6 went up unto the house of the LORD ; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it : and, behold, the 8 half was not told me : thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear 9 thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel to be king for the LORD thy God : because the LORD loved Israel to establish them 10 forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones : there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solo- 13 mon. And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

1 K. 4 : 29-34. *Wisdom* he asked of God, and obtained a wise and understanding heart. He seems to have had a singularly comprehensive mind, that could take pleasure in many studies, a very wide power of observation and reflection, a strong grasp of all the great problems of human life, and "largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore." He was the first man of science in his nation, and though his works on natural history have not been preserved, because they were foreign to the purposes of the Bible, yet all wise and reverent astronomers, botanists, and zoologists may fairly be reckoned as followers of Solomon. On the gravest themes that occupy the mind, "he was wiser than all men," even the famous Idumeans of the East, and the equally famed scholars of Egypt. Like all men of a full mind, he delighted to communicate, and poured himself out in three thousand proverbs, and songs a thousand and five. He also excelled in witty and piercing conversation, and such was the reputation of the royal sage, that "there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." D. F.

The wonderful impression which he made upon all who came near him may well lead us to believe that with him as with Saul and David, Absalom and Adonijah, as with most other favorite princes of Eastern peoples, there must have been the fascination and the grace of a noble presence. Add to this, all gifts of a noble, far-reaching intellect, large and ready sympathies, a playful and genial humor, the lips "full of grace," the soul "anointed" as "with the oil of gladness," and we may form some notion

of what the king was like in his golden prime. He used these gifts not only for the government of his people, but for the acquisition and the embodiment in writing of all the learning of the age. P. S.

29-31. Solomon's wisdom was more his glory than his wealth ; a general account of that we have here. The *fountain* of his wisdom. *God gave it him* (verse 29). He owns it himself (Prov. 2 : 6), *The Lord giveth wisdom*. He gives the powers of reason, preserves and improves them. The ordinary advances of them are owing to his providence, and sanctification of them, to his grace ; and this extraordinary pitch at which they arrived in Solomon, to a special grant of his favor to him, in answer to prayer.

The *fulness* of it. *He had wisdom and understanding, exceeding much* ; great knowledge of distant countries, and the histories of former times ; a quickness of thought, strength of memory, and clearness of judgment, such as never any man had. It is called *largeness of heart*. for the heart is put for the intellectual powers. He had a vast compass of knowledge, could take things entire, and had an admirable faculty of laying things together. He was very free and communicative of his knowledge ; had the gift of utterance, as well as wisdom ; was as free of his learning as he was of his meat ; and grudged neither to any that were about him. Those who have large gifts of any kind should have large hearts to use them for the good of others ; and this is *from the hand of God* (Ec. 3 : 24). He shall *enlarge the heart* (Ps. 119 : 32).

The greatness of Solomon's wisdom is illustrated by comparison. Chaldea and Egypt were nations famous for learning ; thence the Greeks

borrowed theirs ; but the greatest scholars of these nations came short of Solomon (verse 30). If nature excels art, much more does grace. The knowledge which God gives by special favor, goes beyond that which man gets by his own labor. Some wise men there were in Solomon's time who were in great repute ; particularly, Heman, and others who were Levites, and employed by David in the temple music (1 Chron. 15 : 19). Heman was *his seer in the Word of God* (1 Chron. 25 : 5). Chalcol and Darda were own brothers, and they also were noted for learning and wisdom, but *Solomon excelled them all*; his counsel was much more valuable.

The *fame* of it. It was talked of *in all nations round about* (verse 31). His great wealth and glory made his wisdom much more illustrious, and gave him those opportunities of showing it, which they cannot have, that live in poverty and obscurity. The jewel of wisdom may receive great advantage by the setting of it. H.

30. The wisdom of all the children of the East. The nations east of Canaan were famous for wisdom and erudition ; the Chaldeans beyond the Euphrates, the Persians beyond the Tigris, and the Arabians on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little toward the south. Which of these nations was most celebrated for learning in Solomon's time is much doubted by commentators : the Book of Job, however, sufficiently shows that the Arabians were famous for their learning in ancient times.

And all the wisdom of Egypt. It appears from Acts 7 : 22 that Egypt was celebrated for wisdom in the time of Moses. This country has been called "the mother of the arts." There have been great disputes respecting the claims of the Egyptians and Chaldeans to the earliest advances in learning. *Bp. Patrick.*

32, 33. "Largeness of heart" (verse 29) is *breadth of understanding*—a wide range of knowledge ; treasures of science and wisdom, at once minute and comprehensive, covering many spacious fields of human thought. The specifications which appear in the record lead us definitely toward two departments of human knowledge : (1) Natural history, of both animals and plants ; for "he spake of trees ; he spake also of beast and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes." And (2) a department which we have no precisely equivalent term to indicate, but which may be defined as human knowledge expressed in proverbs and cultivated in the framing and solving of "hard questions." It made itself at home in the science of ethics, but was free to go abroad quite beyond this territory. H. C.

The truly wise are truly great ; "great"—that is, in the sense of being fairly entitled to confidence and homage. Our knowledge of Solomon is scanty, yet sufficient to show him a man of great accomplishments. He had "largeness of heart." His large intercourse with other peoples had brought breadth of view and deliberateness. His utterances are neither provincial nor ephemeral ; they are the fruit of judgment, not of passion, and so belong to all men of all times. He had a rare acquaintance with the facts of nature, with "trees" and "herbs" and "fowls" and "creeping things" and "fishes." The accuracy of his information concerning some of these is truly wonderful—his statement as to the habits of harvesting ants, for instance, long disputed, being just now thoroughly vindicated. He "knew" better than most "what was in man." His writings show ample knowledge of affairs and of the subtler agencies by which men are affected. His counsels betray the ripe judgment of an experienced man of the world, and vindicate their sagacity in current experience. *Thomas.*

Solomon's natural science, like that of Oriental philosophers in general, consisted rather in the observation of the more obvious facts in the common life and habits of God's creatures, with an especial view to use them for the poetical illustration of moral lessons : and in this way we find such knowledge used, not only in the Proverbs ascribed to him, but in many of the Psalms, and throughout the Book of Job. The discourses in the latter part of that book about Behemoth and Leviathan are probably a type of the manner in which "Solomon spake of beasts." It clearly follows that we ought not to suppose that Solomon wrote elaborate treatises on these subjects which are now lost. Such forms of communicating knowledge do not belong to his age or country. His three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs probably contained nearly all that he wrote upon such matters in the form of poetical illustration. For the rest, it should be remembered that instruction, in his time and long after, was chiefly oral. The tents of the patriarchs and the abodes of their descendants witnessed many an hour when the ancient father would discourse to his descendants on the lessons of his experience and the traditions handed down by his fathers ; and such we conceive to have been the converse held by Solomon in the midst of his splendid court, only on a much grander scale, and covering a much wider field. P. S.

As the sacred lyric poetry of Israel is connected with the name of David, so Solomon, whose

peaceful times invited the Israelitish mind to self-introspection, was the father of the Hebrew proverbial poetry, and thus the founder of the Old Testament Hhokma, or Wisdom. From his time onward there appeared a special class of men under the name of "the wise," who applied themselves to the consideration of the moral relations of life and the manner in which the world is ordered. It cannot, however, be inferred from verse 33 that they were addicted to physical science, nor that Solomon commenced a complete natural history. For when it is there said that "Solomon spake of trees, of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes," it is that ethical contemplation of nature of which we have specimens in Ps. 104, and in the Book of Job, especially ch. 39-41—that relative knowledge which enabled Solomon in his proverbs to draw comparisons and parables from natural objects, which is intended, and which does not presuppose a scientific knowledge of botany and zoology. O.

The growth of his knowledge was from study. Solomon did not have all the mysteries of nature unveiled to him by revelation. No "royal road to learning" existed then, or ever. His studiousness as a youth may be fairly inferred from his strenuous exhortations to diligence and his frequent rebukes of sloth. Out of the depths of personal experience he declared that the "hand of the diligent maketh rich"—in thought, as well as in purse. The reference here is not so much to scientific treatises and orderly classifications as to the ethical use he made of the phenomena of nature. This may be inferred, partly from the fact that in those days, and in Eastern lands, this rather than that would be accounted "wisdom;" and partly from such writings of his as are still extant—certain of the Psalms, the Canticles, and the Proverbs. In the light thrown by these books, it will be seen that through Solomon's wisdom the voice of Nature spoke to his people for God, in the same fashion as in far nobler tones it spoke afterward through Him who made the lilies whisper of God's care, and the fallow fields speak of Christian duty. Inanimate things and dumb creatures spoke to Solomon's people through him, and should speak to us. *Rowland.*

In the Book of Proverbs, of the greater part of which Solomon was undoubtedly the author, there is an amount of wisdom, knowledge of men and manners, sound sense and practical sagacity, such as no other work presents. *An.*—It abounds in allusions, now found for the first time and precisely applicable to the age of Solomon—to gold and silver and precious

stones; to the duties and power of kings; to commerce. In them appears the first idea of fixed education and discipline, the first description of the diversities of human character. In them the instincts of the animal creation are first made to give lessons to men. The Book of Proverbs is not on a level with the Prophets or the Psalms. It approaches human things and things Divine from quite another side. It has even something of a worldly prudential look, unlike the rest of the Bible. But this is the very reason why its recognition as a sacred book is so useful. It is the philosophy of practical life. It is the sign to us that the Bible does not despise common sense and discretion. It impresses upon us, in the most forcible manner, the value of intelligence and prudence, and of a good education. It deals, too, in that refined, discriminating, careful view of the finer shades of human character so necessary to any true estimate of human life. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and the stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." How much is there, in that single sentence, of consolation, of love, of forethought. And, above all, it insists, over and over again, upon the doctrine that goodness is "wisdom," and that wickedness and vice are "folly." *Stanley.*

The Book of Proverbs deals with industry, frugality, foresight, integrity, sobriety, purity. It shows that Solomon loved wisdom, lived for it, and strove to endear it to others, and that wisdom was not only his pursuit, but his delight. The Proverbs prove him to have been a shrewd observer of men in all stations; reading their motives, and predicting results; glancing at their weaknesses and detecting their hollowness, painting wisdom in all phases, and folly in all disguises, bearing hard on talebearing, slander, and domestic brawls. One would think that he had lived freely and mingled familiarly with all classes, that he had rioted and vaunted with the rich, and sighed and suffered with the poor, that he had entered into the bosom of the fool and sluggard, and had been partner of all their silly acts and excuses; that he had been lounging amid the chafferings of the bazaar, that he had felt the gripe of the usurer, had been at a feast where the guest spoke daggers, and at a rustic repast where love revelled with roots and herbs. *J. Eadie.*

We need not ascribe all these proverbs to Solomon as their first author. He was collector as well as inventor. Sententious sayings were common long before his day, as we see even from the proverb quoted by his father, David, "From the wicked goeth wickedness" (1 S.

24 : 13). Amid the darkness which covered those distant ages, and in their brief memorials of men's lives and works, we can thus see clearly a large body of thinkers and writers, a people who enjoyed literature, and took means for diffusing knowledge. "To write" had even come to be used with a figurative meaning in the ordinary language of Hebrews, an indication of great advances made by them in acquaintance with the art: "Write them upon the table of thine heart" (Prov. 3 : 3 ; 7 : 3), where the reference to the two tables of stone is unmistakable. Familiarity with writing and with books is implied in this proverbial use of the word far more than in the Greek poet's "mindful tablets of the soul," coined for the Athenian theatre by Æschylus five centuries afterward. A book of proverbs is less intended for private reading than as a means of verifying what is said, or of refreshing a learner's memory. Proverbs—"the wit of one man and the wisdom of many"—are the ready money of thought, passing rapidly from man to man in the interchanges of life. Books may be used for handing them down to future ages, but movement and fire can be given to them only in spoken application to the actings of men. Proverbs are not for lonely reading by the learned; they are rather for use in the homeliest as well as in the weightiest business of the world. To find a book of this kind in circulation among any people implies, therefore, great advances in literature. Gathering wisdom from the sayings of others, coining of it into words from observing their doings or the results, and committing the whole to writing, are three stages of progress all brought together in the book. *Sime.*

34. The attention of the world was arrested by this glare of Judean sunshine. Kings, too great to come in person, sent shrewd observers, who should discover, if they were able, the secret of this unexampled weal. Philosophers journeyed far to commune with one who could speak of trees, and discourse of beasts and fowl, of creeping things and fishes. Literary men had a desire to perfect their art under a royal penman whose writings were so prolific, who spake three thousand proverbs, and whose songs were a thousand and five; and sages would love to commune with him who was, confessedly, wiser than all living men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. The wisdom of Solomon was the gift of God, but it was improved by continual observation and persevering study. Though, Atlas-like, the king had to bear a state burden which would have crushed other men,

he yet remained an eager student to the last; he still "sought to acquaint his heart with wisdom." *Outram.*

Between the reigns of Saul and Solomon a great development took place in the literature of the Hebrew people. It is seen in the arrangements of the king's court, in the writing of national records, in the proverbs which circulated among the people, and in the numerous hymns of the national worship. Of Saul's chief officers only one is mentioned in the history—Abner, the commander-in-chief. David, on the other hand, appears surrounded by a body of able men, to whom the various branches of the public service were entrusted. Of these one was book writer, or, as we should call him, secretary of State, while another was recorder or historian. But in Solomon's reign, the writing of public books or State papers had largely increased. Instead of one secretary, he had two, and also a recorder. Besides them, others were engaged in writing the history of the king. Nathan the prophet, Iddo the seer, and Ahijah the Shilonite were of the number. To these six writers must be added the king himself. Seven writers of history, poetry, and philosophy are thus mentioned during the life of Solomon. It is a large list to be found in a record so brief. But it indicates an increasing familiarity in the nation with all sorts of literature. And the short review given of the king's own works discovers to us at a glance a book-reading people. *Sime.*

With Solomon a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. The curtain which divided them from the surrounding nations was suddenly rent asunder. The wonders of Egypt, the commerce of Tyre, the romance of Arabia, nay, it is even possible, the Homeric age of Greece, became visible. Of this the first and most obvious result was the growth of architecture. But the general effects on the whole mind of the people must have been deeper still. A new direction seems to have been given to Israelite thought. In Solomon we find the first beginnings of that wider view which ended at last in the expansion of Judaism into Christianity. His reign contains the first historical record of the contact between Western Europe and Eastern India. In his writings and in the literature which sprung from them, is the only Hebrew counterpart to the philosophy of Greece. *Stanley.*

THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

1 K. 10 : 1-10, 13.

This is recounted chiefly to deepen the impression of the surpassing greatness of the King,

and the incomparable magnificence of his court. For a very brief period God exalted this small nation of Israel to an equal or superior place among the great monarchies of the East. He endowed Solomon with a never-equalled wisdom, with the honoring admiration of kings, princes, and people of the world, on account of his mastery of all knowledge, and of his unheard of success in every earthly attainment that could impart grandeur or gratify desire. As if to show how boundless would be His favor, and how rich and unnumbered His gifts, God's prospering hand was upon everything for a time. He made the land to yield according to its highest measure. He blessed all Solomon's plans and undertakings, so that a world-wide traffic in every branch was made exceedingly lucrative for this merchant-sovereign. The cities which he built, or rebuilt, in the wilderness, on the Gulf or the Euphrates, all were made to subserve his purposes and extend his kingdom. So were the splendid structures by which he adorned Jerusalem and augmented the fame of his personal administration; among them his own immense palace, requiring thirteen years in building, the Queen's palace, his private porch and his public one for administering justice. A fuller detail of what he did for personal gratification and display, we read in Ecclesiastes. It was at this period, when his sway was widest and his fame most extended, when the brilliancy of his court was at its height, when the wisdom of his administration and his obedient regard to the word and worship of God had not yet begun to fail, that the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem. B.

Probability unites with ecclesiastical history, and with the Jewish traditions and Mohammedan accounts, in describing her as queen of the Sabæan kingdom of Yemen, and Mariaba or Saba, as the seat of its government. This point is so well established by Bochart and others, that it may be received as an ascertained fact. It is, besides, verified by the terms employed by our Saviour in alluding to this pilgrimage. He calls her the "Queen of the South," or *Yemen*, which is in Hebrew, as in Arabic, the proper word for *South*; and he speaks of her as having come "from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon," which exactly corresponds to the Joktanite kingdom of Sheba, Saba, or Sabæ, which is terminated only by the Indian Ocean, whose waters, blending with those of the Atlantic, divide Asia from Africa. It may be added, that all the precious commodities which the queen brought to Jerusalem, were such as the region thus assigned to her was in old time famous for producing. *Kil.*

Far to the south, on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, the country of Sheba (probably the modern *Yemen*) was ruled by a queen, who seems to have enjoyed among the tribes of Arabia a reputation like Solomon's for wisdom. His fame reached her ears, and she determined to judge for herself. With an immense caravan of camels, bearing gold and precious stones and spices, she came to Jerusalem, to try Solomon with those "hard questions," which have always formed the favorite exercise of Oriental ingenuity. "She communed with him of all that was in her heart." The perfect wisdom of the king's replies in this conflict of wit and learning, the magnificence of his buildings, the splendor of his royal State, the order of his court, completely overwhelmed the queen: "there was no more spirit in her." She confessed that all was true which she had heard, and refused to believe, in her own country; nay, the half had not been told her; and she blessed Jehovah, and the people to whom He had given such a king. Having given and received magnificent presents, she departed to her own country; and the odor of her visit was long preserved by such an abundance of spices as was never known at Jerusalem before or since. Whether she went back a convert to the true faith, as her praises of Jehovah seem partly to imply, and how far her visit tended to the planting of the numerous proselytes whom we afterward find in Arabia, can only be matter of conjecture; and the traditions, by which the simple narrative of her visit is overlaid, scarcely deserve notice. But the zeal with which she journeyed from the ends of the earth, to prove for herself the wisdom of which she had heard so much, stands recorded by "One greater than Solomon" for the eternal shame of those who neglect to hear Him, when he stands in their very midst; Him who is the incarnate Wisdom that formed the noblest subject of Solomon's discourse. The visit of the Queen of Sheba marks the culminating point of Solomon's glory. P. S.

Whatever may have *especially* influenced her to undertake so novel a pilgrimage, three things in regard to it are beyond question. She was attracted by the fame of Solomon's *wisdom*; she viewed that wisdom in connection with "the Name of Jehovah:" and she came to *learn*. What the higher import of this "wisdom" was, is explained by Solomon himself in Prov. 3:14-18, while its source is indicated in Prov. 2:4-6. Thus viewing it, no event could have been more important, alike typically and in its present bearing on the ancient world. The Queen had come scarcely daring to hope that

Eastern exaggeration had not led her to expect more than she would find. It proved the contrary. Whatever difficulty, doubt, or question she propounded, in the favorite Oriental form of "riddles," "whatever was with her heart," "Solomon showed (disclosed to) her all her words" (the spoken and unspoken). And here she would learn chiefly this: that all the prosperity she witnessed, all the intellectual culture and civilization with which she was brought into contact, had their spring above, with "the Father of lights." A. E.

1-3. *The object of the Queen's visit, how accomplished.* The whole incident shows that she came to prove the truth of what she had heard, with respect to Solomon's wisdom, his greatness and splendor, and with regard to the house, the character, and worship of Jehovah. Christ's implied commendation intimates that she had an honest purpose and desire to obtain wisdom, and to know more of God. Her kingdom was probably in the angle of Arabia, and her visit may have been partly occasioned by commercial intercourse begun by Solomon. Of the gold, spices, and precious stones which she brought, she gave the chief part to Solomon (verse 10), according to Oriental custom. On reaching Solomon's presence, at once she sought the solution of questions that had caused her doubt and trouble of heart. So much is implied, but no hint is given of any particular. All that is needed we know, that her heart-questions were satisfactorily answered, and it was the marvelous wisdom evinced in those answers, far more than anything she afterward saw of Solomon's regal state, that overcame her spirit and prompted her words of eulogy.

4, 5. *Other visible evidences of his surpassing wisdom witnessed by the Queen.* Beside the wise and efficient economy of his entire government in its grand outlines of plan and detail, particular reference is here made to the admirable ordering of his court; the gorgeous apparelling of his ministers and other high officers; the sumptuous provision of his table, and the elegant appointments of its service; and the exceeding strength and beauty of his great architectural structures. Special notice is taken of the "ascent" or upbuilt pathway which Solomon had constructed from his own palace to the temple area; an arched viaduct whose remains, recently discovered, have been reasonably identified. All these things, *added to the previous and vastly superior proofs* of a superhuman guidance and help, filled her with amazement. B.

According to the Scripture narrative, the queen of Sheba found evidence of the wisdom

of Solomon not only in his words, but in his works. His magnificent palace, "the house of the forest of Lebanon;" the manner in which meat was provided for, and served at his table; the ordering of his courts and audiences, with his ministers and high officers standing according to their rank, in their gorgeous apparel; his cup-bearers, with their precious goblets; and, above all, the viaduct whereby he crossed the valley which separated his palace from the temple of the Lord; all these things were objects of special admiration to this foreign princess, and drew from her the striking declaration:—"It was a true report that I heard in my own country of thy acts and thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes have seen it; and, behold the half was not told me. Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." There is a general belief among the Jewish writers, that the queen was turned from her dumb idols to worship the living God, under the instructions of Solomon. There is nothing unlikely in this. Indeed, the words which connect "the name of the Lord" with the wisdom of Solomon, give much sanction to the opinion that the search for religious truth, the true "wisdom," was the main object of her journey,—as are the words which closed her address to Solomon:—"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand by and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be Jehovah thy God, which delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel; because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore hath He made thee king, to do judgment and justice." *Kit.*

6-10. *Her acknowledgment, eulogy, benediction, and gift.* "Thy wisdom and prosperity," she said, "exceedeth the report which I heard." Congratulating his subjects, she continues, "Happy thy servants who continually hear thy wisdom." Then she magnifies the God of Israel, because of his goodness toward Solomon and his love toward Israel in establishing the throne of David's son. She spake out her heart, and her words were partly occasioned by her experience among her people. When we apply these words in their higher and more appropriate connection with that Sovereign, also Son of David, "a greater than Solomon," and that wider, richer kingdom, with a nobler, more enduring City, Temple, and palaces, we can better appreciate their true beauty and breadth of significance. We can understand a second and better reason for embodying this unimportant incident in the Inspired history. So, indeed, it is with Solomon's own history, apart from the use which God made of the man and his experi-

ence in the writing of the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. We can *fully* account for all the distinctions providentially showered upon him, and for the rich ancestral promises centring upon his person and reign, only by the typical relation he bore to that "Branch of Jesse," whose name is "The Lord our Righteousness," in whose days it is declared "Israel shall dwell safely." And this is precisely the use which the prophets make of Solomon and of his reign. Christ is the true Solomon, *Prince of Peace*. His is the *everlasting kingdom*. To Him "the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him. He shall have dominion from the river to the ends of the earth." And "blessed are they that dwell in His house!" B.

David was active strength, Solomon, wisdom and peace; Christ is both power and wisdom, mighty Conqueror and Prince of Peace. He is the King, reigning in righteousness, to the gates of whose Jerusalem the resources of all nations must be brought. All nations shall call Him blessed. Happy they who come to Him now and hear His wisdom! A Greater than Solomon is here. In our "Prince of Peace" are hid "all treasures of wisdom and knowledge." D. F.

Our blessed Lord has honored this story of the queen of Sheba's visit by drawing *one* of its lessons with his own hand. He has reminded us that she came "from the ends of the earth," and that her purpose was to "hear the wisdom of Solomon." Sheba, or Yemen, was some fifteen hundred miles distant from Jerusalem. But ancient journeys are not to be measured by miles, but by hours. Now both the queen and her company travelled by camels, and the camel can only go, with any degree of comfort, at a walking pace, and, like other beasts of burden, must have occasional rests. Even if they had some "swift dromedaries" for the queen, the pace must have been regulated by the sumpter camels. We may be pretty sure, therefore, that the party would not travel, on the average, more than twenty miles a day, which would give something like seventy-five days for the journey to Jerusalem, and the same for the return. And she endured the hardships of this long journey to hear wisdom. It is clear that to her "*wisdom*" was "the principal thing," and she brought gold and *rubies* to obtain it. She is like the "merchantman seeking goodly pearls." She has found one pearl of great price, and she will give all that she has to possess it. True, she *saw* the wonders of Solomon's court, but she came to *hear* his wisdom. She envied his cour-

tiers, not because of their places or palaces, but because they stood before him and heard his words. And our Saviour has said that this conduct will condemn the men of *His* generation. Much more it may condemn the men of our own time. *Hummond*.

Indomitable earnestness in inquiring is impliedly commended, and the high merit of Solomon's wisdom recognized by the Divine Teacher. But the narrative is treated, not as something to be looked *at* only, but rather to be looked *through* in search of "some better thing" beyond. Good was the quest of the earnest queen, and great was Solomon, whose wisdom she sought to hear; but far better the yearning for the "wisdom from above," as the Son of God is "greater" than the earthly son of David.

On our Lord's authority, therefore, we may fairly assert that *Wisdom is worthy of diligent pursuit*. The Queen of Sheba lived in the intellectual dawn of the world, and her country was in the shadows behind the dawn; but she was among them "that watch for the morning," and that "come to the light" when its first beams appear. She was not content to "hear of" the wisdom of Solomon, but must "hear" it also. When we remember that the breadth of the earth interposed in vain, we are reminded that

Wisdom does not come unsought. The Balearic mothers hang their children's food on the limbs of trees, and they must go hungry until they can bring it down with the bow. So God lets the vein of gold look through, but not lie open upon the rock. He puts the star-depths within reach of the telescope, but not of the naked eye. The secrets of nature are given up to the wit and not to the listlessness of men. "The clouds may drop down titles and estates," but "wisdom must be bought." In vain, however, is "the price of wisdom in the hand of a fool," if he have "no heart to it."

"*Wisdom is the principal thing*." All else is appendage. In Solomon's prayer at Gibeon he "showed his wisdom in asking for wisdom;" for in getting the fountain-head he got the stream. Our success in life depends not only on a right perspective—that is, seeing great things as great—but on a right order—that is, seeking first things first. In vain does the rich man "lay up much goods for many years" for his "soul," if he has not first made certain that he will have a "soul" beyond to-night. Wisdom "held (even) in her left hand riches and honor" for Solomon. She, and not they, made him known in "the uttermost parts of the earth."

Wisdom is akin to piety. It is the righteous-

ness of the mind as that is the righteousness of heart and life. The wise man knows the truth, the religious man does the truth. And this is practical wisdom ; for all sin is folly. The sinner breaks himself upon or grinds himself to powder under the rock which is always in the way, and on which the wise man builds. True science is no more at right angles with true religion than the multiplication table with honest dealing. *Thomas.*

Happy are we, that a wiser, holier, better counsellor is accessible to us, every day, every hour. Whoever enters His council chamber, stands in heavenly sunbeams ; the true light shines round about him. Whoever comes to Him in his ordinances, and proves Him with hard questions, will find the shadows of ignorance depart. But learn a lesson from the resolute Queen of Sheba. Have we any equivalent to show for her long and wearisome journey ? any labors in prayer and waiting, any gift of the heart's true treasures ? The value of her offering was truly great. She was a queen, it is true, but she queened it in her lavish generosity. And if we would please the Giver of wisdom, we, too, must be prepared to give. He has in His household, the Church, many poor and needy members, and many, not of the fold, are to be brought in. If we would profit by His wisdom, we must be cheerful givers ; we must bring presents and come into His courts. Every picture drawn by the pencil of inspiration is marvellously instructive. The figure of Solomon dispensing wisdom points us irresistibly to One who is wisdom and redemption, and whom, with His Father, truly to know is everlasting life. The pilgrimage of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, that she might acquire wisdom, is a voice to the wise in heart. *Outram.*

"A Greater than Solomon is here." Christ leads men to wisdom of a higher order. Solomon is the most secular of the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Divine things are approached by him, as it were, on the lower, earthly side. A prudential tone is given to the counsels of religion, and vice is set forth not so much as wickedness but as "folly." Think of the marked difference between the utterances of Solomon's wisdom and the sublime spiritual elevation of David's psalms. And when we come to Christ's teaching, what immeasurably loftier heights and deeper depths of Divine truth are

here ! Redemption, holiness, immortality, are His themes — the deeper "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ;" "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Solomon, too, was but a learner, not a master. His were but guesses at truth. Christ's were the authoritative utterances of the incarnate "Word." Solomon spoke according to the limited measure of the spirit of truth in him. Christ spoke out of His own infinite fulness. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." Whence, indeed, did Solomon's wisdom come but from Him, the true fontal "Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world ?" The words that the wise in every age have spoken were but dim, dawning rays of the light that broke in a glorious day upon the world when He, the Sun of Righteousness, arose. *Waite.*

It is a spirited and glowing description which the historian here gives of Solomon's wisdom. We may believe that it was not without a pardonable pride that he recounted the rich endowments and the widespread fame of Israel's greatest monarch. But it is really one of the saddest chapters in the whole of Scripture—and one of the most instructive. Manifold as were his gifts, marvellous as was his wisdom, they did not preserve him from falling. It is a strange, shuddering contrast, the record of his singular powers and faculties, and the story of his shameful end. How came it to pass that a man so highly gifted and blessed of God made such complete shipwreck of faith and good conscience ; that over the grave of the very greatest and wisest of men must be written, "Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen from his high estate ?" *Hammond.*—Alas for him, who had dispensed wisdom as the sun dispenses his beams ! Alas for him, and for the glory of human nature in him ! He experienced a distressing, a perplexing change. His many wives, the women of neighboring idolatrous countries, turned away his heart after other gods, and their impure and inhuman rites were connived at. And when Solomon died he left his kingdom on the verge of ruin. The mischief which began under him, had the sanction of his great name, and spread its poisonous fibres over the land, so that vile lusts were introduced as portions of man's "reasonable service," and altars were found "on every high hill and under every green tree." *Outram.*

Section 296.

SUMMARY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN: ITS WIDE EXTENT AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE PEOPLE.

1 KINGS 4 : 20, 21, 24, 25. 2 CHRONICLES 9 : 26.

1 K. 4 : 21 AND Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt : they brought presents, and served Solomon all the 24 days of his life. For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings on this side the River : and he had peace on all sides round 25 about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig- 20 tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry.

This is a most alluring picture of the state of Israel in these days. It might be called the Augustan age of their nation—the age of greatest prosperity and peace, yet with all the efflorescence of that most brilliant period in their annals, the age, like that of Augustus in Rome, of commencing degeneracy. David and Samuel were to Solomon what the older Romans were even to the best of Rome's imperial sovereigns ; and in respect even to sacred literature, the Psalms occupy a far higher and more prominent place in the Bible than do the Proverbs and other works of Solomon. It is not said that Solomon's kingdom reached to the Euphrates ; but all the kingdoms between his own and the Euphrates were tributary and subservient to him. The daily consumption here recorded indicates a prodigious court and immense household establishment. But far the most interesting feature in this description is the peace and plenty and safety enjoyed by the general population—each man under his own vine and his own fig-tree. T. C.

Much of the prosperity of Solomon's reign was owing to the extraordinary glory of the reign of David. Such a rule as David's sowed seeds of blessing in the land, which it was Solomon's privilege to reap. David united the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and Solomon came into quiet possession of the completed commonwealth. David laid the foundation, Solomon developed the fabric and adorned it. Rowland.

The empire ascribed to David and Solomon is an empire of *exactly that kind* which alone Western Asia was capable of producing, and did produce, about the period in question. The modern system of centralized organization, by which the various provinces of a vast empire are cemented into a compact mass, was unknown to the ancient world, and has never been

practised by Asiatics. The satrapial system of government, or that in which the provinces retain their individuality, but are administered on a common plan by officers appointed by the crown—which has prevailed generally through the East since the time of its first introduction—was the invention of Darius Hystaspis. Before his time the greatest monarchies had a slighter and weaker organization. They were in all cases composed of a number of separate *kingdoms*, each under its own native king ; and the sole link uniting them together and constituting them an empire, was the subjection of these petty monarchs to a single suzerain. The Babylonian, Assyrian, Median, and Lydian, were all empires of this type—monarchies wherein a sovereign prince at the head of a powerful kingdom was acknowledged as suzerain by a number of inferior princes, each in his own right sole ruler of his own country. And the subjection of the inferior princes consisted chiefly, if not solely, in two points ; they were bound to render homage to their suzerain, and to pay him annually a certain stated tribute. Thus, when we hear that “ Solomon reigned over *all the kingdoms* from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines and unto the border of Egypt ”—or, again, that “ he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh (or Thapsacus on the Euphrates) to Azzah (or Gaza, the most southern of the Philistine towns), over *all the kings* on this side the river ” (verse 24)—and that “ they *brought presents* ” (verse 21)—“ a rate *year by year* ”—and “ *served* Solomon all the days of his life ” (verse 21), we recognize at once a condition of things with which we are perfectly familiar from profane sources ; and we feel that at any rate this account is in entire harmony with the political notions and practices of the day. G. R.

21. From the river unto the land of the Philistines. The boundaries of Solomon's kingdom were, the Euphrates to the east (that river being here, as in other places of Scripture, called *the river*, by way of eminence, without any addition); the country of the Philistines which bordered on the Mediterranean Sea to the west and Egypt to the south; so that he had tributary to him the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea. *Stackhouse.*

25. Every man under his vine and fig-tree. This is a common and beautiful metaphor for peace and security (Mic. 4 : 4; Zech. 3 : 10), founded on the practice, still common in modern Syria, of training these fruit-trees up the walls and stairs of houses, so as to make a shady arbor, beneath which the people sit and recreate themselves. *Jamieson.*—It suggests the quiet enjoyment of the good of life, the fruit of honest labor, under the protection of impartial law, which is the result of peace. It is the reign of peace that fosters the industries that enrich the life of a people, and the beneficent activities that beautify it. And in the happy condition here described, we have a prophecy of the reign of David's "greater Son." Ps. 72 has its partial fulfilment in the days of Solomon; but the grandeur of its prophetic meaning is realized only in the surpassing glory of His kingdom who is the true "Prince of righteousness and peace." *Waite.*

Now the Church of Israel was in its highest external glory. Now Israel was multiplied exceedingly, so that they seemed to have become like the sand on the sea-shore. Now the kingdom of Israel was firmly established in the right family, the family of which Christ was to come. Now God had chosen the city where he would place his name. Now God had fully given his people the possession of the promised land; and they now possessed the dominion of it all in quietness and peace, even from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates; all those nations that had formerly been their enemies, quietly submitted to them; none pretended to rebel against them. Now the Jewish worship in all its ordinances was fully settled. Now, instead of a movable tent and tabernacle, they had a glorious temple; the most magnificent, beautiful, and costly structure that there was then, ever had been, or ever has been since. Now the people enjoyed peace and plenty, and sat every man under his vine and fig-tree, eating and drinking, and making merry. Now they were in the highest pitch of earthly

prosperity, silver being as plenty as stones, and the land full of gold and precious stones, and other precious foreign commodities, which were brought by Solomon's ships from Ophir, and which came from other parts of the world. Now they had a king reigning over them that was the wisest of men, and probably the greatest earthly prince that ever was. Now their fame went abroad into all the earth, so that they came from the utmost parts of the earth to see their glory and their happiness.

Thus God was pleased, in one of the ancestors of Christ, remarkably to shadow forth the kingdom of Christ reigning in his glory. David, that was a man of war, a man who had shed much blood, and whose life was full of troubles and conflicts, was more of a representation of Christ in his state of humiliation, his militant state, wherein he was conflicting with his enemies. But Solomon, that was a man of peace, was a representation more especially of Christ exalted, triumphing, and reigning in his kingdom of peace. And the happy, glorious state of the Jewish Church at that time, did remarkably represent two things: (1) That glorious state of the Church on earth, that shall be in the latter ages of the world; those days of peace, when nation shall not lift sword against nation, nor learn war any more. (2) The future glorified state of the Church in heaven. The earthly Canaan never was so lively a type of the heavenly Canaan, as it was then, when the happy people of Israel did indeed enjoy it as a land flowing with milk and honey. *Edwards.*

Jerusalem in her Glory under David and Solomon.

And now, like the modern city of Berlin under the hands of the Great Frederick, Jerusalem bloomed into sudden glory. All the successes of the new monarch, and all the extending prosperity of the nation, were reflected in the rising splendors of the capital. Especially was Jerusalem dignified, nay consecrated, by being made the abode of the Ark of the Covenant, the chief though not exclusive seat of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the great resort for national worship. On Mount Zion a place was prepared for the shrine of the sanctuary, which for a long time had been in exile, and with high rejoicings it was set therein; Mount Zion becoming henceforth, even after the building of the Temple on Moriah and the transference of the ark thither, the symbol of God's kingdom in His Church. Yet conspicuous and mighty as Jerusalem became, under the thirty-three years of David's residence in it as his capital, the full height of its glory was not attained until King

Solomon had endowed it with the imperial magnificence characteristic of his reign. The reign of Solomon is much celebrated in the Scriptures, yet perhaps we seldom attain to a just conception of its grandeur. Solomon inherited the fruits of David's vast conquests. He came into receipt of untold accumulated resources. And it was for him to realize and exhibit the glory which had been prepared for him. N. C. B.

After this the glory of the Jewish Church gradually declined more and more till Christ came ; yet not so but that the work of redemption still went on. Whatever failed or declined, God still carried on this work from age to age ; this building was still advancing higher and higher. Things still went on, during the decline of the Jewish Church, toward a further preparation of things for the coming of Christ, as well as during its increase ; for so wonderfully were things ordered by the infinitely wise Governor of the world, that whatever happened was ordered for good to this general design, and made a means of promoting it. When the people of the Jews flourished, and were in prosperity, he made that to contribute to the promoting this design ; and when they were in adversity, God made that also to contribute to the carrying on of the same design. While the Jewish Church was in its increasing state, the work of redemption was carried on by their increase ; and when they came to their declining state, which they were in from Solomon's time till Christ, God carried on the work of redemption by the decline itself, which was one thing that God made use of as a further preparation for Christ's coming. *Edwards.*

Brief, indeed, was the period of Israel's glory ; but for the moment it seemed that there were but three empires to divide the old civilized world—Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, for Israel and Phœnicia were practically one. Solomon reigned over all lands from the Euphrates to the Nile, from the mountains of Armenia to the Arabian Desert ; and he ruled them in peace. Yet it was but a fleeting gleam of splendor. The central land of Israel was girdled round with tributaries, not colonists ; fear was the only bond of union. There was no germ of any sentiment which might develop into a common sympathy. There was no missionary spirit in the garrisons of Solomon. The very last idea to cross the mind of the Jew was to include the Gentile tributary in the religious or civil privileges of his people. Meantime, Hebrew life, private and public, was becoming leavened with foreign influences, Assyrian, Egyptian, and especially

Phœnician. The sudden accumulation of riches developed luxury ; palaces, horses, hareems, were not of Abraham or of Moses. No. The casket and shrine in which truth was to be conserved until the fulness of time should come, could never be kept safely in charge of a wealthy and a conquering empire. For God's purposes, as a symbol and a lesson, that empire was won by David, and held by his typical son. In God's providence it passed away, "till the Ancient of days shall come," and "his kingdom shall not be destroyed." H. B. T.

Jerusalem To-day.

It is tantalizing for the traveller who wishes to recognize in his walks the site of particular buildings, or the scenes of memorable events, that the greater part of the objects mentioned in the description, both of the inspired and of the Jewish historian, are entirely razed from their foundation, without leaving a single trace or name behind to point out where they stood. Not an ancient tower, or gate, or wall, or hardly even a stone remains. The foundations are not only broken up, but every fragment of which they were composed is swept away, and the spectator looks upon the bare rock with hardly a sprinkling of earth to point out her gardens of pleasure, or groves of idolatrous devotion. A few gardens still remain on the sloping base of Mount Zion, watered from the pool of Siloam : the gardens of Gethsemane are still in a sort of ruined cultivation ; the fences are broken down and the olive-trees decaying, as if the hand which dressed and fed them were withdrawn : the Mount of Olives still retains a languishing verdure, and nourishes a few of those trees from which it derives its name ; but all round about Jerusalem the general aspect is blighted and barren ; the grass is withered ; the bare rock looks through the scanty sward, and the grain itself, like the starving progeny of famine, seems in doubt whether to come to maturity or die in the ear. Jerusalem has heard the voice of David and Solomon, of prophets and apostles ; and He who spake as man never spake has taught in her synagogues and in her streets. Before her legislators, her poets, and her apostles, those of all other countries became dumb, and cast down their crowns, as unworthy to stand in their presence. Once she was very rich in every blessing, victorious over all her enemies, and resting in peace, with every man sitting under his own vine, and under his own fig tree, with none to disturb or to make him afraid. Jerusalem was the brightest of all the cities of the east, and fortified above all other towns ; so

strong that the Roman conqueror thereof, and the master of the whole world besides, exclaimed, on entering the city of David, and looking up at the towers which the Jews had abandoned, "Surely, we have had God for our assistance in the war; for what could human hands or human machines do against these towers? It is no other than God who has expelled the Jews from their fortifications." It is impossible for the Christian traveller to look upon Jerusalem with the same feelings with which he would set himself to contemplate the ruins of Thebes, of Athens, or of Rome, or of any other city which the world ever saw. There is in all the doings of the Jews, their virtues and their vices, their wisdom and their folly, a height and a depth, a breadth and a length that angels cannot fathom; their whole history is a history of miracles; the precepts of their sacred book are the most profound, and the best adapted to every station in which man can be placed; they moderate him in prosperity, sustain him in adversity, guide him in health, console him in sickness, support him at the close of life, travel on with him through death, live with him throughout endless ages of eternity, and Jerusalem lends its name to the eternal mansions of the blessed in heaven which man is admitted to enjoy through the atonement of Christ Jesus, who was born of a descendant of Judah. *Richardson's Travels.*

SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
THIS PERIOD.

It is evident that, during the period of Solomon, the state of *social life* among the Jewish people underwent a very great change. An immense flow of wealth into the country took place. Through intercourse with other countries, many new habits and fashions were undoubtedly introduced. The people must have lost not a little of their early simplicity of character and life. A splendid court had been set up and a splendid capital built. Commercial relations had been established with remote parts of the world. A great stride had been taken in the direction of luxury and refinement. There was now a standing army, a large staff of civil officers, and a vast number of menial servants in the country. Besides the ass the horse and the mule were now introduced as beasts of burden; chariots and splendid equipages were set up; and many persons assumed the style and bearing of princes. Private dwellings must have undergone a corresponding change, and all the luxuries of Egypt and Nineveh would be-

come familiar to the Hebrews. But was all this for good? It appears as if the nation, or its leaders, now struck out a new path for themselves, in which God rather followed than preceded them, giving them, indeed, at first, a large measure of prosperity, but leaving them more to their own ways and to the fruits of these ways than before. This, at least, was plainly the case under Solomon. The vast wealth circulated in his time over the country, did not bring any proportional addition, either to the material comfort, or to the moral beauty, or to the spiritual riches of the nation. There can be no doubt that "haste to be rich" brought all the evils and sins which always flow from it in an age of progress toward worldly show and magnificence.

It appears from the Proverbs that many new vices were introduced. Many of the counsels of that book would have been quite inapplicable to a simple, patriarchal, agricultural people; but they were eminently adapted to a people surrounded by the snares of wealth and the temptations of commerce, and very liable to forget or despise the good old ways and counsels of their fathers. The Proverbs will be read with far greater interest, if it be borne in mind that this change had just taken place among the Hebrews, and that, as Solomon had been instrumental in giving the nation its wealth, so, perhaps, he was led by the Spirit to write this book, and that of Ecclesiastes, to guard against the fatal abuse of his own gift.

In *literary and scientific culture* the nation must have made a great advance during this period. In a merely literary point of view, the Psalms of David and the writings of Solomon possess extraordinary merits; and we cannot doubt that two literary kings, whose reigns embraced eighty years, or nearly three generations, would exercise a very great influence, and have their example very largely followed among their people. David's talents as a musician, and the extraordinary pains he took to improve the musical services of the sanctuary, must have greatly stimulated the cultivation of that delightful art. What David did for music, Solomon did for natural history. It need not surprise us that all the uninspired literary compositions of that period have perished. If Homer flourished (according to the account of Herodotus) 884 years before Christ, Solomon must have been a century in his tomb before the "Iliad" was written. And if it be considered what difficulty there was in preserving the "Iliad," and how uncertain it is whether we have it as Homer wrote it, it cannot be surprising that all the Hebrew

poems and writings of this period have been lost, except such as were contained in the inspired canon of Scripture.

There were, also, great *religious* changes during this period of the history. Evidently, under Samuel, a great revival of true religion took place ; and the schools of the prophets which he established seem to have been attended with a marked blessing from Heaven. Under David the change was confirmed. In the first place, the coming Messiah was more clearly revealed. It was expressly announced to David, as has been already remarked, that the great Deliverer was to be a member of his race. David, too, as a type of Christ, conveyed a more full and clear idea of the person and character of Christ than any typical person that had gone before him. Further, the Psalms of David must have served very wonderfully to give precision, and force, and richness to devotional feelings among godly people. Then, too, the distribution of the Levites and the remodelling of the temple service must have secured at least much more attention to the ordinary services of religion. The writings of Solomon show how much more clear, full, and rich views prevailed now than formerly, regarding Christ's person and qualities, and his relation to his people. The lyrical compositions of the two royal authors corresponded to the typical character of each. As David's reign was a warlike reign, and Solomon's a reign of peace, so David was the psalmist of storms and struggles, Solomon of tranquillity and rest. The great preponderance in

number of David's inspired songs over Solomon's, shows how much more frequently in this world Christians need to be directed and encouraged to struggle with enemies than to enjoy and improve the sweets of repose.

It is interesting to inquire how far a religious spirit pervaded the people at large. The question cannot receive a satisfactory answer. It is plain that even in David's time the mass of the people were not truly godly. The success of Absalom's movement is a proof of this. Had there been a large number of really godly persons in the tribe of Judah, they would not only not have joined the insurrection, but their influence would have had a great effect in hindering its success. The real state of matters seems to have been, that both in good times and in bad there were some persons, more or less numerous, of earnest piety and spiritual feeling, who worshipped God in spirit, not only because it was their duty, but also because it was their delight ; while the mass of the people either worshipped idols, or worshipped God according to the will, example, or command of their rulers. But the constant tendency was to idolatry ; and the intercourse with foreign nations which Solomon maintained, as well as his own example, greatly increased the tendency. Under Solomon, indeed, idolatry struck its roots so deep, that all the zeal of the reforming kings that followed him failed to eradicate them. It was not till the seventy years' captivity of Babylon that the soil of Palestine was thoroughly purged of the roots of that noxious weed. W. G. B.

Section 297.

THE APOSTASY OF SOLOMON AND THE ANNOUNCED JUDGMENT OF JEHOVAH.

1 KINGS 11 : 1-13.

1 K. 11 : 1 Now king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of 2 Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you for surely they will turn away your heart after their 3 gods : Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and 4 three hundred concubines : and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods : and his heart was 5 not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Am 6 monites. And Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully 7 after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomi-

8 nation of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from the LORD,
10 the God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods : but he kept not that which the LORD com-
11 manded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely
12 rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake : but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.
13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom ; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

The final effects of Solomon's prosperity. With an impartial fidelity that pertains always to the inspired historians, the result is told as it affects himself, and implied as it bears upon the future of the people. Inexpressibly sad is the record of his own declension and fall. First, he became more and more secularized by the increasing absorption of mind and heart in his schemes of acquisition, of pleasure, and of aggrandizement. In the gratification of ambition and self-indulgence, his extravagance of expenditure kept pace with the excess of God's bounties. In accumulating thousands of horses and chariots out of Egypt, he not only disobeyed an express law given by Moses, but by his reliance upon these rather than upon the footmen of Israel, who had hitherto proved an overmatch for all hostile armies, he reversed the great principle that God had commanded—the principle so touchingly expressed by David, “Some trust in chariots and in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”

Further, he disobeyed God's express command by multiplying wives, in foolish, rivalrous compliance with a custom by which Oriental monarchs were wont to estimate and display their grandeur. And in this he also transgressed another law in marrying women of strange nations who retained the observance of their idolatrous worship.

But worse than all, under the deteriorating effect of utter selfish worldliness, and through the example and influence of his heathen wives, at last he dared openly deny and defy the God whose Temple he had built, and whose worship he had re-established among the people ; the God who had dealt so kindly and bountifully with him. Upon the hill before Jerusalem, face to face with the beautiful Temple, with its pure worship prescribed and approved of God, with its still visible symbol of God's personal presence, he built high places, altars of sacrifice, for “Moloch and Chemosh, the abominations of Ammon and Moab,” himself becoming an open public idolater in sight of priests and

people. And all this he did, in despite of so many solemn, tender warnings from the very mouth of God himself. So deeply self-degraded at last became this royally gifted, divinely favored king of kings !

And the effect of his misused prosperity upon the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, was a deterioration as rapid as its growth in greatness had been. Priests and people rapidly declined in religious, industrial, and social culture. The orderly rule and organized industry by which a powerful unity and a vigorous national life had been created, were speedily displaced by the old social disorders and sectional divisions, which broke the kingdom in twain, and which were never afterward healed. From thenceforth the Jewish character steadily degenerated, and the fortunes of the Jewish people gradually declined until the period of the Messiah's advent, when an utter godlessness prevailed, and the long disintegrated tribes were ground to the dust under the enslaving tyranny of Herod and the Roman power.

This, in brief, is the history, these the effects of Solomon's prosperity upon himself and upon the Jewish people. Of the gradual inner change in his character we have no Scriptural record. But of three marked stages in his life we possess distinct intimations in his three Books : the Songs, written in the outset of his reign and the fervor of his youthful devotion ; the Proverbs extending through mid-life, while he was making experience, and his wisdom rightly interpreted that experience in the spirit of God's commands ; and Ecclesiastes, the confession of a wasted and miserable life, wrung out of conscience in his latest days.

We know that God disquieted his latter years by raising up enemies to annoy, and by the announcement that his grand kingdom should be dismembered and the chief part taken from his son. But himself, his own power, God did not directly strike, and this *for David's sake*. And nowhere in the Sacred History find we such testimony to the amazing patience and forbear-

ance of God in the holding back of judgment ; such an exhibition of His fidelity to promise, even under a dispensation so necessarily rigid and severe. Only the promise of *long life* was withheld because utterly forfeited. He was not old in years, but prematurely so through excessive indulgence, when from his own experience he drew that graphic picture of bodily decay which completes his writings ; and which is itself completed by the concentrated "conclusion" or lesson of his own mournful life : *Fear God and keep his commandments !* From God's love to David and his wonderful regard to his own covenant with the father, and from the son's words of confession, we may hope that Solomon was at length brought back to repentance and found forgiveness. But the hope is dim and the inference is not certain. B.

1-8. *The story of Solomon's defection and degeneracy.* He doted on strange women, *many strange women*. Here his revolt began. He should have taken warning by his father David's fall. He took many women, so many, that, at last, they amounted to 700 wives and 300 concubines ; 1000 in all, and not one good one among them, as he himself owns in his penitential sermon (Ec. 7 : 28). God had, by his law, particularly forbidden the kings to multiply either horses or wives (De. 17 : 16, 17). How he broke the former law, in multiplying horses, and having them *out of Egypt, too* (which was expressly prohibited in that law), we read (ch. 10 : 29), and here how he broke the latter, which proved of more fatal consequence. But this was not all. They were strange women, Moabites, Ammonites, etc., of the nations which God had particularly forbidden them to intermarry with (verse 2). To complete the mischief, *Solomon clave unto these in love* (verse 2). He not only kept them, but set his heart upon them. He was drawn by them to the worship of strange gods ; as Israel to Baal-peor, by the daughters of Moab. None of these consequences were so bad as this, *His wives turned away his heart after other gods* (verses 3, 4). He grew cool and indifferent in his own religion, and remiss in the service of the God of Israel. *His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God* (verse 4), nor did he *follow him fully* (verse 6), like David. His father David had many faults, but he never neglected the worship of God, nor grew remiss in that, as Solomon did, his wives using all their arts to divert him from it, and *there* began his apostasy. And he not only tolerated and maintained his wives in their idolatry, but made no scruple of joining with them in it. At last he reached that degree of impiety that he set up high places for

the foulest heathen gods *in the hill that is before Jerusalem, the mount of Olives*, as if to confront the temple which he himself had built ; these high places continued here, not utterly demolished, till Josiah did it (2 K. 23 : 13). This is the account here given of Solomon's apostasy. H.

We may infer from the repeated warnings of God that Solomon was long in danger of falling into idolatry. This danger was increased no doubt by the inclination to foreign customs. But this inclination itself was again occasioned by circumstances and relations of his reign, which must be regarded as remote concurring causes of his final fall. Among these is first to be reckoned the commerce carried on by Solomon, which on the one hand enhanced his love of splendor by the accumulation of great wealth, and produced a luxury scarcely to be reconciled with the simple manners of a theocratic king, and on the other hand, introduced a degree of tolerance toward heathen customs and religious views, which was scarcely consistent with the religion of Jehovah. Next the great wisdom of Solomon might become itself a perilous rock, because the widespread fame of this wisdom brought a multitude of men to Jerusalem, whose homage not only awakened his vanity but led him to a still greater tolerance and approximation to the heathen world. These things diminished the partition wall between the true worship of God and the heathen idolatry, and so prepared the way for the possibility of the apostasy. The proper immediate causes of his fall was his connection with many foreign heathen wives. *Keil*.

Since the first man Adam, the world hath not yielded either so great an example of wisdom or so fearful an example of apostasy as Solomon. What human knowledge Adam had, in the perfection of nature by creation, Solomon had by infusion ; both fully, both from one fountain. If Adam called all creatures by their names, Solomon "spake from the cedars of Lebanon to the moss that springs out of the wall ;" and besides these vegetables, there was no beast, nor fowl, nor fish, nor creeping thing, that escaped his discourse. Both fell ; both fell by one means ; as Adam, so might Solomon have said, "The woman deceived me." It is true, indeed, that Adam fell as all ; Solomon, as one ; yet so as that this one is the pattern of the frailty of all. If knowledge could have given an immunity from sin, both had stood.

Affections are those feet of the soul on which it either stands or falls. "Solomon loved many outlandish women." Every word hath bane

enough for a man : women ; many women ; outlandish ; idolatrous ; and those, not only had, but doated on. Sex, multitude, nation, condition, all conspired to the ruin of a Solomon. If one woman undid all mankind, what marvel is it, if many women undid one ? Yet had those many been the daughters of Israel, they had tempted him not to mis-devotion ; now they were of those nations whereof the Lord had said to the children of Israel, " Go not ye in to them, nor let them come in to you ; for surely they will turn your hearts after their gods." To them did Solomon join in love. Who can marvel if they disjoined his heart from God ? *Bp. II.*

4. When Solomon was old. At least half of the king's reign was over before the Temple and the king's house and the other buildings were completed. It was therefore toward the close of his reign when the influence of his wives gained undue sway over him. *Lumby.*

It was when he was old, says the historian, when the ardor of his youthful devotion had sadly waned ; when wealth and luxury had induced effeminacy, and after unbounded admiration and high position had stealthily undermined his piety—it was upon a heart long exposed to these subtle influences that the social power of so many wives—princesses of leading influence, of high culture, and commanding social position—was brought to bear upon him to his sad fall. Many of them, we know not definitely how many, came with the prestige of royalty, representing the dignity of courts and kingdoms. Shall not the king of Israel receive them with all the honors due to the kingdoms and thrones which they represent ? Shall he not respect the religions they severally profess ? Politeness, complaisance, the demands of civilized society, the interests of international peace and commerce—all concur in demanding unrestricted toleration of their idolatrous worship. So it would seem ; so, but for the higher claims of God, and of truth, and of his holy covenant, it would be. When to these demands of worldly sort we add the fact that Solomon clave to these wives and concubines in love—that his sensitive nature yielded to such powerful attractions—we have no need to go further to seek the occasion of Solomon's relapse into great sin. He became an idolater. " His wives turned away his heart after other gods : " " his heart was no longer perfect with the Lord his God as the heart of David his father." Specifically it is stated (verses 5 and 7), that Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zido-

nians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. He also built high places and furnished every facility for the worship of these gods—the abominations of Moab and Ammon. *H. C.*

5. Ashteroth-Karnaim. The word *Ash-teroth* is the Hebrew plural of *Ashtoreth* (the Greek *Astarte*), name of a female divinity widely worshipped among the ancient inhabitants of Canaan ; for example, by the Zidonians (1 K. 11 : 33 ; 2 K. 23 : 13), by the Philistines (1 S. 31 : 10), and also on the east side of the Jordan, as is seen in this passage. The Israelites were often seduced into this debasing worship ; see Ju. 2 : 13 ; 10 : 6 ; 1 S. 7 : 3, 4 ; 12 : 10 ; 1 K. 11 : 5, 33 ; 2 K. 23 : 13. This form of idolatry originated in the worship of the heavenly bodies (" the host of heaven," De. 4 : 19), regarded as presiding over the seasons, regulating their return, and dispensing their blessings. As Baal was the Sun-god, representing the sun's dominion over earth (and also the planet *Jupiter*, " the star of Jove, the guardian and giver of good fortune"), so Ashtoreth represented the moon, and also the planet *Venus* " the goddess of love and fortune." Under the former character, the image of the idol bore on the head the figure of a crescent moon ; and hence the name *Ashteroth-Karnaim* (literally, *Ashtoreth of two horns*), the crescented, or moon-ed, Ashtoreth. Here it has the plural form, Ashteroth ; either from the number of images erected as objects of worship, or indicating different modifications of the same divinity. *Conant.*

Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. This is the same Divinity who is called below (verse 7) Molech, and in Zeph. 1 : 5 Malcham. Molech was a fire god, and was worshipped with human sacrifices. There are numerous allusions in the Old Testament to the worship of this god, the phrase most common being " to make their children to pass through the fire to Molech."

8. And likewise did he for all his strange wives. For such of them as desired a special place for their worship. Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Molech would suffice for the greater number, but we know of other gods among the nations round about, and the text implies that all were equally regarded. *Lumby.*

There seems no possibility of explaining the language of the sacred historian, but as intimating that Solomon became an actual and open idolater, worshipping images of wood or stone in sight of the very temple which, in early life, he had erected to the true God. Hence that part of Olivet was called the high place of Tophet (*Jer.*

7 : 30-34), and the hill is still known as the Mount of Offence, or the Mount of Corruption (2 K. 23 : 13). *Jamieson.*

Whether he forsook his own temple and the worship of the God of his own covenant is of the least possible account. If he did not in form, he certainly did in spirit, for none can serve both God and Mammon—both Jehovah and idol gods. If he attempted it, his example could scarcely be less pernicious than if he had utterly deserted his magnificent temple. In either case his moral power must have gone solid against real religion—against the true worship of the holy God. The contrast between Solomon on his knees before all the assembled thousands of Israel in his prayer consecrating the new temple, and this same Solomon, going with his scores or hundreds of heathen wives to worship their gods on the high places of the land, must have been terribly impressive—to all pious hearts sad, not to say revolting; but to the masses, we have reason to fear, seductive toward the same idol worship. So much we must infer from the well-known laws of the human mind, and from the relations of the throne to the people under the religious system of Israel. *H. C.*

It was short-sighted policy in Solomon, as well as worldly want of faith, to seek to conciliate the foreign heathen at the expense of the devoted allegiance of God's chosen ones in Israel. He won at best a momentary good-will from Ammonites, Moabites, or Sidonians, by such an affinity, and by such an introduction of their favorite idols; he lost the heart of the prophets of Jehovah, and, as a result, he could not transmit to his son more than a fraction of his kingdom. It is no mere fiction of priestly prejudice, but an historical certainty, that David owed his rise mainly to the overruling and pervading power exerted on him by the pure and monotheistic faith of the prophets; while Solomon lost (for his posterity) the kingdom of the ten tribes, and perpetuated strife, weakness, debasement, and superstition, by preferring the attractive splendors of this world to that godliness which would in the end have been rewarded even in the present life. *F. W. Newman.*

Disasters followed before long as the natural consequence of what was politically a blunder as well as religiously a sin. The strength of the nation rested on its unity, and its unity depended on its faith. Whatever attractions the sensuous ritual which he introduced may have had for the great body of the people, the priests and Levites must have looked on the rival worship with entire disfavor. *Dic. B.*—There was also an increase in the old evil of disunion

in the nation itself. Its chief bond of union lay in its religion; and through the royal tolerance and support of idolatry the religious tie was being rapidly weakened. Would religious men make pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the feasts only to be scandalized when they arrived there by high places for Chemosh and for Molech, "on the hill that is before Jerusalem," within sight of the temple itself? (verse 7). And if Jerusalem was an offence to them, why should it remain their capital? And what offended religious Israelites did not attract others; for those who lapsed into idolatry could have their own impious altars at home. There was no need to go to the Mount of Olives to worship. Thus for all classes, religious and irreligious alike, the tie that bound them to the capital was fast becoming weaker, and in the next reign it snapped altogether. *Plummer.*

The man who had been specially favored of God, who on two distinct occasions had been visited by him in dreams or visions of the night, who had built for his worship a temple which was the glory of the kingdom and the wonder of the world, and who in wisdom had excelled all the men of his age—this man was seen going into the temples of Ashtoreth, bowing before the altars of Milcom, burning incense to Chemosh, and even joining in the bloody rites of Molech. It was not the good that sanctified the evil, it was the evil that corrupted the good. *An.*

He encouraged immorality and cruelty. It must never be forgotten what the "abominations" of these Semitic divinities were like. The idolatry of the East always involved impurity; hence its powerful hold on a nation like the Jews, for whom the worship of "silver and gold, the works of men's hands," could have had but little charm. Its "vile affections" (Rom. 1 : 26) were its chief attractions. And Solomon, who knew what the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth meant, who knew how unclean were their rites, and what painful and shameful sacrifices Molech and Chemosh demanded of their votaries, nevertheless gave the word, and presently the hills about Jerusalem were crowned with chapels of devils.

He dishonored the one true God. For if "Polytheism is not exclusive," Monotheism, in the very nature of things, is and must be. Its basis, its fundamental conception, is that there are not "gods many and lords many." Its keynote is the *Shema Israel* (De. 6 : 4), "the Lord our God is one Lord." It proclaims a "jealous God" who will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images (Is. 42 : 8). But

Solomon robbed Him of His rights ; of the exclusive sovereignty and the undivided authority which belonged to Him alone. By building idol altars he claimed homage for idol deities ; before the eyes of the Lord's people, he thrust rivals and pretenders on to the Lord's throne, and degraded "the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man" (Rom. 1 : 23).

He defied the Holy One of Israel. For these altars of lust and cruelty were not built in a corner. They rose "on the hill that is before Jerusalem ;" they fronted the altar of Jehovah ; their priests were visible to the priests in the temple court ; their smoke ascended to the sky along with the smoke of the daily sacrifice. If insult had been *designed*, it could hardly have been more open or obtrusive.

And these shrines of infamy were built by the wisest of men, the most enlightened and favored of men, the builder of the temple, the teacher of the Church, and a man who warned others. Furthermore, these degrading results were not occasioned by sudden or special temptation, nor after great trials and adversity, nor in the days of inexperienced and warm-blooded youth. It was when his blood was coolest, his knowledge ripest, his experience most mature, when his riches were most abundant, and his prosperity at the highest. And it was after repeated warnings, from the law of Moses, the special injunctions of David, and the three distinct, supernatural warnings of God ; the perfect apprehension of all which warnings he discloses in his own repeated and emphatic admonitions addressed to others. *Hammond.*

Who can but yearn and fear, to see the woful wreck of so rich and goodly a vessel ! O Solomon, wert not thou he, whose younger years God honored with a message and style of love ? to whom God twice appeared ; and, in a gracious vision, renewed the covenant of his favor ? whom he singled out from all the generation of men, to be the founder of that glorious temple, which was no less clearly the type of heaven, than thou wert of Christ, the Son of the ever-living God ? Wert not thou that deep sea of wisdom, which God ordained to send forth rivers and fountains, of all Divine and human knowledge to all nations, to all ages ? Wert not thou one of those select secretaries, whose hand it pleased the Almighty to employ, in three pieces of the Divine monuments of Sacred Scriptures ? Which of us dares ever hope to aspire unto thy graces ? Which of us can promise to secure ourselves from thy ruins ? We fall, O God, we fall to the lowest hell, if thou

prevent us not, if thou sustain us not. "Uphold thou me, according to thy word, that I may live ; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." All our weakness is in ourselves ; all our strength is in thee. O God, be thou strong in our weakness, that our weak knees may be ever steady in thy strength. *Bp. H.*

The Judgment of Jehovah Announced.

Verses 9-13.

The Divine appearance, first at Gibeon, and then at Jerusalem, after the dedication of the temple, with the warnings given him on both occasions, had left Solomon inexcusable ; and it was proper and necessary that on one who had been so signally favored with the gifts of Heaven, but who had grossly abused them, a terrible judgment should fall. The Divine sentence was announced to him probably by Ahijah ; but there was mercy mingled with judgment, in the circumstance that it should not be inflicted on Solomon personally—and that a remnant of the kingdom should be spared—"for David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which had been chosen" to put God's name there : not from a partial bias in favor of either, but that the Divine promise might stand. *Jamieson.*

Time was when the Lord loved Solomon (2 S. 12 : 24), and delighted in him (ch. 10 : 9) ; but now *the Lord was angry with Solomon.* There was in his sin the most base ingratitude ; he turned from the Lord *which had appeared unto him twice*, once before he began to build the temple, and once after he had dedicated it. God keeps account of the gracious visits he makes us, whether we do or no ; knows how often he has appeared to us, and *for us*, and will remember it against us, if we *turn from him*. God's appearing to Solomon, was such a sensible confirmation of his faith, as should have forever prevented his worshipping of *any other God* ; it was also such a distinguishing favor, and put such an honor upon him, as he ought never to have forgotten, especially considering what God said to him in both these appearances. There was also the most wilful disobedience : this was the very thing concerning which *God had commanded him—that he should not go after other gods*, yet he was not kept right by such an express admonition (verse 10). The sentence is just, that since he had revolted from God, part of his kingdom should revolt from his family ; he had given God's glory to the creature, and therefore God would give his crown to his ser-

vant, "I will rend the kingdom from thee, in thy posterity, and will give it to thy servant, who shall bear rule over much of that for which thou hast labored." Yet the mitigations of it are very kind, for David's sake (verses 12, 13); that is, for the sake of the promise made to David; thus all the favor God shows to man is for *Christ's sake*, and for the sake of the covenant made with him; the kingdom shall be rent from Solomon's house, but Solomon shall not live to see it done, but it shall be rent out of the hand of his son, a son that was born to him by one of his strange wives, for his mother was an Ammonitess. One tribe, that of Judah, the strongest and most numerous, shall remain to the house of David (verse 13), for Jerusalem's sake, which David built, and for the sake of the temple there, which Solomon built, these shall not go into other hands. H.

The execution of the sentence is both delayed and modified. Not in Solomon's own reign shall the thing be done; "nor shall the kingdom be wholly torn from his house." This is partly from tender regard for the sacred memory of David his father, and partly, we may believe, in mercy to himself, that space may be given him for repentance. We have here a type and example of the general method of God's ways. "In wrath he remembers mercy." Something of gracious forbearance is seen in the severest of His judgments. His chastisements are fatherly. And beneath the darkest providences and the sternest retributions there is the steady flow of a loving-kindness that endures throughout all generations, the strength of a covenant that shall never be broken.

The smile of God that rested as glad sunshine on his head, has turned to "anger." The cause of the change is in the secrecy of his own soul. The Scripture narrative is silent about the course of his inner life, the phases of thought and feeling through which he may have passed; so that this sudden note of discord in the midst of the harmony strikes us with something of sad surprise. Enough, however, is said to show that it was a moral change in the man himself. The Lord God of Israel had not changed in his purpose or method; it is Solomon whose "heart is turned from him." How far this was a fatal change, a real apostasy, we know not. We need not attempt to solve the purely speculative question as to whether he ever recovered from his fall; his later writings suggest at least the hope that it was so. *Waite.*

The Course and Steps of Solomon's Fall.

It is not difficult to conjecture what was the

first beginning of declension on Solomon's part. We find it in the erection of the palaces, or rather in the carnal mind and the self-love and the desire for ostentation which led to their erection. Solomon is now no longer the "little child" he once was. Now that he has "strengthened himself," like his son after him, he begins to forget his God and to forsake His law. It has been promised him that he shall exceed all other kings in wisdom and riches and honor; but this is not enough for him, he must surpass them also in the outward tokens of wealth and power. His palaces, to begin with, must be greater than theirs. He no longer covets the best gifts. The fine gold is become dim. Still, so far, there has been no deliberate, or perhaps even conscious infraction of the law—only the worldly and selfish mind.

It is impossible to say in what precise order the records of Solomon's reign are to be arranged, but it is probable that the next downward step is to be traced in the alliance in which he engaged with the Tyrians. Contact and copartnership with idolaters could hardly be for the advantage of the faith. Nor is it difficult to see that Solomon's commerce grew at the expense of his religion. Riches, proverbially a dangerous possession, were with him—wise though he was—a step toward utter ruin. All the time that his fleets were ploughing the main, that caravans of merchants were filling his store cities, that he was driving bargains with the Syrians and Hittites, leanness was spreading in his soul—he was becoming more and more a secular prince. And yet this commerce, it is easy to see, may have been in its commencement unexceptionable. Possibly it was in part undertaken to provide gold for the embellishment of the temple. But it soon engendered, if, indeed, it was not engendered by, that "love of money which is the root of all evil." As Solomon grew richer he loved riches more. Verse 23 is full of significance. "So Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and wisdom." Time was when wisdom held the first place (ch. 3 : 11). And so it came to pass that he who at first was "rich toward God," and who, like David his father, had only accumulated gold for the glory of the sanctuary, proceeded to "multiply silver and gold to himself" (De. 17 : 17).

And so the years passed by. To all outward appearance his glory and magnificence increased. It is very suggestive to consider how hollow was that prosperity which was the marvel of the world, and how that wisdom which was so renowned was foolishness with God.

The court became more splendid, more voluptuous, more dazzling, but the man became year by year poorer and meaner and baser. It only needed one step more—and apparently he was not long in taking that—to complete his defection. The other monarchs of his time had their seraglios. It was necessary that he, too, should have an establishment of this kind, and he must have it even greater than theirs. He knew that the law forbade the multiplication of wives, but he had violated the law already; he might just as well do it again. And so the Lord's anointed gathered round him in the holy city a thousand strange, immodest women. His fleets and merchants brought him mistresses from every land. And *they* brought with them their foreign rites, and the effeminate king was taken captive by their charms, and they had their way, and nothing would suffice them but he must tolerate their religion, and what he did for one he must do for all, and so the end of sin and shame is reached, and the decline becomes a fall, and "the darling of Jehovah," the wisest of men, the representative of Heaven, the builder of the temple, the type of our Lord, builds altars to the "abominations" of Moab and Ammon "in the hill that is before Jerusalem." *Hammond.*

So fatally may the noblest personal endowments and the richest advantages of life foster the evil tendencies of the heart when once it has surrendered itself to their control. If it be true that "there is a soul of goodness in things evil," it is equally true that nothing is so good but that the spirit of evil may transform it into an instrument of moral injury. The fascinations of outward life are full of danger when that spirit lurks within. The wealth of a man's intellectual resources, the multitude of his possessions, the range of his influence, do but put into his hands the more abundant means of wrong-doing when his heart is not loyal to the good and true. *Waite.*

Causes of His Fall.

How came this wisest of men, without fellow before or since, whose wisdom was so profound, so real, so boundless, whose wisdom came from God and led to God, and who though dead yet speaketh, how came *he* of all men to go astray? Was it not—

Because the heart was not kept. The intellect, i.e., was developed and cultivated at the expense or to the neglect of the spiritual life. "His wives turned away his heart." But how came one of so much wisdom to let his wives turn it away? Because the wisdom had

dwarfed and overshadowed the soul; because the moral did not keep pace with the intellectual growth, and it became flaccid and yielding. It is dangerous for wisdom to increase unless piety increases with it. The higher the tower, the broader should be its foundations. If all the weight and width is at the top, it will come to the ground with a crash. Even so, if wisdom is not to destroy its possessor, the basis of love and piety must be broadened. "Knowledge bloweth up, but charity buildeth up." The head of a colossus needs the trunk of a colossus to sustain it.

Because his own precepts were not kept. It was because he leaned to his own understanding that this giant form fell prostrate. It was because he forgot his warnings against the strange woman that he fell a prey to strange women. The keeper of the vineyards did not keep his own (Cant. 1 : 6). He was not true to himself, and he soon proved false to his God. After preaching to others, he himself became a cast-away. A solemn warning this to every preacher and teacher.

Because pride poisoned his wisdom and perverted his gifts. There was no decay of mental power; the force was unabated, but it was misdirected. Pride took her place at the helm. It is pride, not sensuality, accounts for his army of wives and concubines. But if pride brought them, pleasure kept them. *Hammond.*

Its Chief Lesson.

Solomon's great sin was the encouragement and the establishment of idolatry in and about Jerusalem. The great providential purpose of Israel was the maintenance of faith in, and worship of, one true God. It was to this inheritance of faith and duty, consecrated by the struggles of so many generations, that Solomon had succeeded. The building of the temple was the great work of his life, and it is this fall which throws his later apostasy into such painful relief. The temptation came to him chiefly through his affections. Solomon's wives could do what probably no one man in his empire could possibly have done—they perverted the heart of the wisest of men.

Solomon's fall was not prevented by his old age, nor by his knowledge, nor by previous sincerity. We have no means of solving the question of Solomon's final salvation; but this is certain, that his sin brought its penalty in this world: "I will surely rend the kingdom from him." The practical lesson of such a fall as Solomon's is, that perseverance in God's service is not a matter of course with any one of us,

but that it is a distinct gift or grace of God, to be secured by watchfulness and prayer. We who are neither kings nor sages may well take warning by this history of the wisest of kings. Let us watch the issues, we can never fully explore the depths of these hearts of ours. Let us grasp the hands that were pierced in mercy for us on the cross. Let us look constantly, humbly, to God, as the source of our strength. H. P. L.

Section 298.

ADVERSARIES TO SOLOMON RAISED UP BY JEHOVAH : HADAD THE EDMITE, REZON OF DAMASCUS, AND JEROBOAM, AN EPHRAIMITE.

1 KINGS 11 : 14-40.

I K. 11 : 14 AND the LORD raised up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite :
 15 he was of the king's seed in Edom. For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab
 the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, and had smitten every male in Edom ;
 16 (for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in
 17 Edom ;) that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go
 18 into Egypt ; Hadad being yet a little child. And they arose out of Midian, and came to
 Paran : and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh
 king of Egypt ; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.
 19 And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister
 20 of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. And the sister of Tahpenes bare him
 Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house : and Genubath was in Pha-
 21 raoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh. And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept
 with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let
 22 me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast
 thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country ? And he an-
 swered, Nothing : howbeit let me depart in any wise.
 23 And God raised up *another* adversary unto him, Rezon the son of Eliada, which had fled
 24 from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah : and he gathered men unto him, and became captain
 over a troop, when David slew them *of Zobah* : and they went to Damascus, and dwelt there-
 25 in, and reigned in Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon,
 beside the mischief that Hadad *did* : and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.
 26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose
 27 mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, he also lifted up his hand against the king. And
 this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king : Solomon built Millo, and re-
 28 paired the breach of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man
 of valor : and Solomon saw the young man that he was industrious, and he gave him charge
 29 over all the labor of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam
 went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way ; now
 30 Ahijah had clad himself with a new garment ; and they two were alone in the field. And
 31 Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces. And he
 said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces ; for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I
 32 will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee : (but he
 shall have one tribe, for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I
 33 have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel :) because that they have forsaken me, and have
 worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom
 the god of the children of Ammon ; and they have not walked in my ways, to do that which is
 34 right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. How-
 beit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand : but I will make him prince all the
 days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my command-

35 ments and my statutes : but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it
 36 unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant
 may have a lamp alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my
 37 name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul de-
 38 sireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I
 command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep
 my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did ; that I will be with thee, and
 39 will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will
 40 for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam :
 but Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until
 the death of Solomon.

Solomon's adversaries. As the historian has collected together in chaps. 6, 7, 8, all the information he can convey respecting the *temple*, and in chaps. 9, 10, all the scattered notices respecting Solomon's *power* and *greatness*, so here he arranges in one section the history of Solomon's *adversaries*. It must not be supposed that the following records stand in due chronological order. The enmities here mentioned did not date from the delivery of the message of which we have just heard ; on the contrary, the hatred and opposition of Hadad and Rezon began at an early period, though not the earliest (ch. 5 : 4), of Solomon's reign. It was only in his later life, however, that they materially affected his position and rule ; hence it is that they are brought before us at this stage of the history, and also because they are manifestly regarded as chastisements for Solomon's sin. *Hammond.*

Solomon's sin shall not escape the rod of men. Rather than so wise an offender shall want enemies, God shall raise up three adversaries unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, Rezon the king of Aram, Jeroboam the son of Nebat ; whereof two were foreign, one an Israelite. Nothing but love and peace sounded in the name of Solomon ; nothing else was found in his reign while he held in good terms with his God ; but when once he fell foul with his Maker all things began to be troubled. There are whips laid up against the time of Solomon's foreseen offence, which are now brought forth for his correction. On purpose was Hadad the son of the king of Edom hid in a corner of Egypt from the sword of David and Joab, that he might be reserved for a scourge to the exorbitant son of David. God would have us make account, that our peace ends with our innocence. The same sin that sets debate betwixt God and us arms the creatures against us. *Bp. H.*

HADAD AND REZON.

Verses 14-25.

14. Ill-suppressed enmity in Edom (far

southeast) and more active opposition and intrigue at Damascus (in the northeast)—in short, the danger of a combination like that which had so severely taxed the resources of David : such, so far as concerned external politics, were the darkening prospects of Solomon's later years. But the terms in which Holy Scripture speaks of these events deserve special notice. We are told, that "Jehovah stirred up" or, rather, "raised up" these adversaries unto Solomon (verses 14, 23). The expression clearly points to Divine Causality in the matter (comp. De. 18 : 15, 18 ; Ju. 2 : 18 ; 1 S. 2 : 35 ; Jer. 29 : 15 ; Ezek. 34 : 23). Not, indeed, that the ambitious or evil passions of men's hearts are incited of God, but that while each, in the exercise of his free will, chooses his own course, the Lord overrules all, so as to serve for the chastisement of sin and the carrying out of His own purposes (comp. Ps. 2 : 1, 2 ; Is. 10 : 1-3). *A. E.*

15-21. *Story of Hadad.* In Joab's ruthless war of extermination against Edom (verses 15, 16), the king of Edom seems to have been slain, and all his immediate household, save this then infant prince, Hadad. Some faithful servants carried off their young master, and being joined by other fugitives on the road, went down into Egypt. The king of that country received the young prince with truly royal hospitality and consideration. He assigned to him and his followers a suitable provision : "he gave him a house, appointed him victuals, and gave him land ;" and when Hadad grew up, he bestowed upon him the sister of his queen Tahpenes in marriage. By her he had a son, Genubath, who as soon as he was old enough to be separated from his mother, was removed to the royal palace, where he was weaned by the queen and brought up with the royal children. When Hadad reached to riper years, the keen remembrance of his native land, his lost kingdom, and the slaughter of all his house, gathered strength within him ; and all the ease and princely honor which he enjoyed in Egypt, availed not against the claims of ambition, vengeance, and

patriotism. He dreamed of recovering the throne of his fathers ; he dreamed of exacting stern vengeance for the blood of his kin and country ; he dreamed of making to himself a name like unto the names of the great ones that were upon the earth. These things he dreamed, and

“ Dreams grow realities to earnest men.”

And he was earnest. It was not without difficulty that he obtained leave of the Egyptian king, by whom he had been so generously entertained, to take his departure. It does not appear that he ventured fully to disclose his real objects, for which a reason may be found in the fact that this king was in amicable relations with Solomon, and the same, apparently, whose daughter had been espoused to the Hebrew king.

Proceeding to Edom, the attempts which Hadad made to recover his kingdom seem to have given considerable trouble to the Hebrew government ; but the strong garrisons which David had left in the land, and which Solomon maintained there, prevented them from being successful. Seeing that his case was for the time hopeless in that quarter, Hadad, instead of returning to Egypt, determined to push his fortunes in another direction. He therefore went and joined himself to Rezon, who had already given considerable disturbance to Solomon's power in Syria. This Rezon had some command under that great Hadadezer, king of Zobah, whose overthrow formed one of the most renowned military acts of David's reign. It seems that, on the defeat of the Syrian host, Rezon succeeded in drawing off the force under his command, and enlisting their service in his own interest. Subsisting them for a time in the wilderness by the then common method of predatory warfare, he gradually acquired a sort of fixed power over a portion of Syria nearest to the desert, and eventually established a kingdom, of which Damascus became the capital. All this could not have been effected without much loss and disadvantage to the Hebrew king, especially by interrupting his communication with Tadmor and the Euphrates, and by harassing, if not destroying, the important trade established on that line of route.

It was to this prince that Hadad carried his sword when he found that he could not employ it with any advantage in Edom. Hadad seems to have been a very engaging or very plausible person, for he is well received and wins high favor wherever he goes. Rezon gave him and his followers a most encouraging reception, and

afforded them assistance in establishing themselves in another and neighboring portion of Syria, where Hadad seems to have had ample opportunities of disturbing the peace of Solomon. Nor is this all : for when Rezon died, Hadad added his dominions to his own ; and thus became the virtual founder of that important kingdom of Damascene-Syria, which we afterward find in powerful and often successful warfare with the Israelites. Hadad was, on account of his success and his royal qualities, so much honored by his successors, that Ben-Hadad, “ son of Hadad,” became a common name among them, if, indeed, it was not made an official title, like that of Pharaoh in Egypt.

The reader will not find all this in Scripture, for the intimations respecting Hadad and Rezon, and, in particular, respecting the connection between them, are too brief ; but these facts appear plainly in the succeeding history. *Kit.*

These hostile neighbors, who had been long kept in check by the traditional fame of David's victories, took courage, and breaking out toward the latter end of Solomon's reign, must have not only disturbed his kingdom by their inroads, but greatly crippled his revenue by stopping his lucrative traffic with Tadmor and the Euphrates. *Jamieson.*

JEROBOAM.

Verses 26-40.

We have here the first mention of that infamous name, *Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin* ; he is here brought upon the stage as an adversary to Solomon, whom God had expressly told, that he would give the greatest part of his kingdom to his servant, and Jeroboam was the man. H.—Jeroboam was an internal enemy of a still more formidable character. He was a young man of talent and energy, who, having been appointed by Solomon superintendent of the engineering works projected around Jerusalem, had risen into public notice, and on being informed by a very significant act of the prophet Ahijah of the royal destiny which, by Divine appointment, awaited him, his mind took a new turn. *Jamieson.*

In order to give still more weight to this announcement, the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh discharges his commission to Jeroboam by a symbolical action, followed by an explanatory statement, as the prophets were often accustomed to do. Verses 34-36 append to verse 32 the precise determination that Solomon shall remain prince during life, and that the separation of the ten tribes from his kingdom shall

take place only under his son ; both of these from regard to David, who was chosen to be prince and kept the commandments of God. For his sake also Solomon's son is to retain one tribe, that David may have a light always before the Lord in Jerusalem, the chosen city—that is, that he may never fail in a successor to the throne in Jerusalem. The promise that a light should remain to David, which is repeated four times afterward, is explained by 2 S. 21 : 17, where David is called the light of Israel, which he was only through the Lord, inasmuch as God himself was his light (2 S. 22 : 29) ; or, as it is in the parallel passage (Ps. 18 : 29), the Lord had made his light clear and his darkness light—that is, had raised him from a state of humility and poverty to high honor and great prosperity, for the lighting of the light is a figure of great prosperity, as the extinguishing of it is a figure of adversity (verses 37–39). The condition on which Jeroboam's prosperity is to rest is the same under which the continuance of his sovereignty was promised to Solomon also—namely, true obedience to the commandments of God and upright walking in the ways of the Lord. Jeroboam did not fulfil this condition, and therefore his house was extirpated under his son. *Keil.*

The story, and the prediction connected with it, probably reached the king's ears, and Jeroboam became a marked man. His aspiring ambition, impatient for the death of Solomon, led him to form plots and conspiracies, in consequence of which he was compelled to flee to Egypt. Though chosen of God, he would not wait the course of God's providence, and therefore incurred the penalty of death by his criminal rebellion. The heavy exactions and compulsory labor (verse 28) which Solomon latterly imposed upon his subjects, when his foreign resources began to fail, had prepared the greater part of the kingdom for a revolt under so popular a demagogue as Jeroboam. *Jamieson.*—His power became shorn at the borders, and eventually shaken at home, where the discontinuance of many outer supplies of revenue, and probably the interruption of his various lines of trade—no longer in his undisputed possession—urged him, not to economy and retrenchment, but to make good the deficiency by the taxation of his subjects. *Kit.*

The burden which the new monarch imposed on the people must, in the course of time, have weighed heavily upon them. The succession of great architectural undertakings in Jerusalem and its neighborhood, as well as the building of extensive cities and storehouses all over the

land, however useful and necessary some of these might be, involved a long continuance of forced labor, wholly foreign to the spirit of a free people, and which diverted from their proper channels the industrial forces of the country. Nor was this all. The support of such a king and court must have proved a heavy demand on the resources of the nation. To have to pay enormous taxes, and for many long years to be deprived during so many months of the heads and the bread-winners of the family, that they might do what seemed slaves' labor for the glorification of a king, whose rule was every year becoming weaker, would have excited dissatisfaction even among a more enduring people than those tribes who had so long enjoyed the freedom and the privileges of a federated Republic. It only needed a leader, and once more Ephraim furnished him. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat and of a widow named Zeruah, was a native of Zereda or Zererath, within the territory of Ephraim. The sacred text describes him as a "mighty man of valor." His energy, talent, and aptitude pointed him out as a fit permanent overseer of the forced labor of his tribe. It was a dangerous post to assign to a man of such power and ambition. His tribesmen, as a matter of course, came to know him as their chief and leader, while in daily close intercourse he would learn their grievances and sentiments. In such circumstances the result which followed was natural. The bold, strong, and ambitious Ephraimite, "ruler over all the burden of the house of Joseph," became the leader of the popular movement against Solomon.

It was, no doubt, in order to foment the elements of discontent already existing, as well as because his position in the city must have become untenable, that "Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem" (verse 29). When "the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way, Jeroboam had already planned, or rather commenced, his revolt against Solomon. Himself an Ephraimite (from Shiloh), the prophet would not only be acquainted with Jeroboam, but also know the sentiments of his tribesmen and the views of their new leader. It was not, therefore, Ahijah who incited Jeroboam to rebellion by the symbolical act of rending his new garment in twelve pieces, giving him ten of the pieces, while those retained were emblematic of what would be left to the house of David. Rather did he act simply as the Divine messenger to Jeroboam, *after* the latter had resolved on his own course. The event was, indeed, ordered of God in punishment of the sin of Solo-

mon (verses 11-13) ; and the intimation of this fact, with its lessons of warning, was the principal object of Ahijah's mission and message. But the chief actor had long before chosen his own part, being prompted, as Holy Scripture puts it, by a settled ambition to usurp the throne (verse 37) ; while the movement of which he took advantage was not only the result of causes long at work, but might almost have been forecast by any observer acquainted with the state of matters. Thus we learn once more how, in the Providence of God, a result which, when predicted, seems miraculous, and is really such, so far as the Divine operation is concerned, is brought about, not only through the free agency of man, but by a series of natural causes while at the same time all is guided and overruled of God for His own wise and holy purposes.

Indeed, closely considered, the words of the prophet, so far from inciting Jeroboam to rebellion against Solomon, should rather have deterred him from it. The scene is sketched in vivid outline : Jeroboam, in whose soul tribal pride, disgust at his work, contempt for the king, irrepressible energy, and high-reaching ambition, combined with a knowledge of the feelings of his tribesmen, have ripened into stern resolve, has left Jerusalem. The time for secret intrigue and dissimulation is past ; that for action has arrived. As he leaves the hated city-walls—memorials of Ephraim's servitude—and ascends toward the heights of Benjamin and Ephraim, a strange figure meets him. It is his countryman from Shiloh, the prophet Ahijah. No salutation passes between them, but Ahijah takes hold of the new square cloth or upper mantle in which he has been wrapped, and rends it in twelve pieces. It is not, as usually, in token of mourning, though sadness must have been in the prophet's heart, but as a symbol of what is to happen—as it were, God's answer to Jeroboam's thoughts. Yet the judgment predicted is *not* to take effect in Solomon's lifetime (verses 34, 35) ; and any attempt at revolt, such as Jeroboam seems to have made (verses 26, 40), was in direct contravention of God's declared will. Unlike David, who, though anointed king, would make no attempt upon the crown during Saul's lifetime, Jeroboam, despite the express warning of God, "lifted up his hand against the king." The result was failure and flight into Egypt. Nor did Jeroboam keep the statutes and commandments of the Lord ; and after a brief reign his son fell by the hand of the assassin (1 K. 15 : 28). Lastly, and most important of all—the Messi-

anic bearing of the promise to David, and the Divine choice of Jerusalem and its Temple, were fatally put aside or forgotten by Jeroboam and his successors on the throne of Israel. The schism in the kingdom became one from the Theocracy ; and the rejection of the central Sanctuary resulted, as might have been expected, in the establishment of idolatry in Israel. A. E.

SOLOMON'S RETRIBUTION.

1. *That which he suffered in his own person.*

His life was shortened. Probably by the operation of natural laws. It is not suggested that he was directly smitten of God ; it is quite possible that his rank voluptuousness destroyed his energies and induced premature decay. But his days were cut short. Not only was long life the principal sanction of the dispensation under which he lived, but it had been expressly promised him as the reward of piety. But his sun went down while it was yet noon. He was not sixty when the mandate went forth, "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown" (Ez. 21 : 26). And if it be true, what Dr. Johnson said to David Garrick when the latter showed him his elegant house at Richmond, that great and rare earthly possessions "make deathbeds miserable," it must have cost Solomon a sharp pang to leave so soon his cedar palace and his chryselephantine throne.

His life was embittered. If, as is most probable, we have in the Book of Ecclesiastes a chapter of his autobiography, it is clear that his glory brought him little satisfaction ; there was a worm at the root of all his pleasures. Of what avail were his houses, his gardens, his pools of water, so long as he had not the heart to enjoy them ?

"It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch'd or happy, rich or poor,
For some, that hath abundance at his will,
Hath not enough, but seeks a greater store."

He knew nothing of "the royalty of inward happiness." How different Paul, "Having nothing, yet possessing all things," etc. (2 Cor. 6 : 10). What a commentary on the "confessions" of Solomon, as they have been called, with their everlasting refrain, their *vanitas vanitatum*, is that confession of a man who suffered one long martyrdom of pain—the Baptist minister, Robert Hall—"I enjoy everything."

He was tortured by remorse. This surely may with good reason be inferred. For the wisest of men could not be so insensate, when he heard the message of doom, as not to reflect how different his end was to be from his beginning ;

how fair the flower and how bitter the fruit. Surely the cry he has put into others' lips would often rise from his own, "How have I hated instruction," etc. (Prov. 5 : 12).

He was haunted by forebodings. "This great Babylon" which he had builded, how soon should it be destroyed. The empire which he had consolidated should barely last his life. "One tribe"—how those words would ring in his ears! Then he had good reason, too, to fear that his son was one of the class he had himself described (Prov. 10 : 1 ; 15 : 20 ; 17 : 25 ; 19 : 13), and no match for Jeroboam, of whose designs upon the throne he cannot have been ignorant. He had the mortification of knowing that his "servant" would enter into his labors. And to the prospect of dissensions within was added the certainty of disaffection without. Hadad and Rezon were already on his border, and were only biding their time. The political horizon was, indeed, black and lowering.

2. *The calamities which befell Solomon's house and kingdom.*

In the infatuation of his son. Was there ever a political crisis so wofully mismanaged as that which marked Rehoboam's accession? A few pacific words, a graceful concession, and all would have gone well. But his brutal obstinacy precipitated his downfall. It is for us to remember that "his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess." And this is the result of multiplying wives.

In the dismemberment of his kingdom. The vast empire which Solomon had founded with so much care and pains, how short a time sufficed to tear it asunder. What a contrast between the "one tribe," with its barren territory, and the description of ch. 4 : 20, 21. How had he spent his strength for naught, or rather for his slave Jeroboam, who inherited all the fairest and wealthiest portions of the realm.

In the invasion of Shishak. For he had not long slept with his fathers when the vast treasures which he had lavished on the palace of the Lord and his own palaces were carried away to Egypt. All the precious metals which David had accumulated, all the acquisitions of Solo-

mon's fleets, all the royal offerings of the queen of Sheba and of tributary kings—gone to the sons of the stranger, to the swart children of Ham. He had amassed prodigious wealth, but it was for aliens and enemies. Not only the shields and drinking vessels, but the candlesticks, bowls, and the very *laminæ* which had glorified the sanctuary, all fell to the invader. And this was the end of multiplying *silver and gold* to himself. He had put it all into a bag with holes (Hag. 1 : 6).

In the demoralization of his people. For the idolatries of Judah, the images, the groves, the Sodomites (ch. 14 : 23), were but the continuation and development of the idolatries which Solomon had inaugurated. His son did but reap the crop which himself had sown. Nay, so exact is the *lex talionis* that we presently find a queen of Judah erecting a "horror" for the most shameful of rites (ch. 15 : 13). And this was the result of building altars for his queens and princesses "on the hill that is before Jerusalem," that within a few years the Lord's people, whose was the law and the temple, built them high places, "on every high hill and under every green tree" (ch. 14 : 23).

In the captivity of the nation. For the dispersion and enslavement of the Jewish people, though consummated some four centuries later, and though it was the retribution of a long series of sins, was, nevertheless, in a sense, the result of Solomon's sin. That is to say, his sin was (as ch. 9, verses 6, 7 show) the first beginning of that ever-deepening apostasy from the Lord, of which the captivity was, from the first, denounced as the punishment. Other princes, no doubt, followed in his steps and filled up the measure of iniquity, but the *Grand Monarque* of their race had first showed them the way. And so the people who had held sway even to the Euphrates were carried beyond the Euphrates, and those who had seen subject kings in their land became subjects in a foreign land (Jer. 5 : 19). How full of instruction and warning is it that the captivity which Solomon foretold (ch. 8 : 46) he should have done so much to precipitate. He predicted both his own and his nation's downfall. *Hammond.*

Section 299.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF SOLOMON. POINTS OF HIS CHARACTER AND LIFE,
AND EFFECTS OF HIS REIGN.

1 KINGS 11 : 41-43. 2 CHRONICLES 9 : 29-31.

1 K. 11 : 41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the
 42 acts of Solomon? And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was
 43 forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father : and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Solomon died at Jerusalem in the fortieth year of his reign, and was buried in the royal sepulchre in the city of David. The history of his reign was written by the prophets Nathan and Ahijah, by Iddo the seer, in his "Visions against Jeroboam," and in the "Book of the Acts of Solomon." The first three works probably formed the basis of the narrative in the *First Book of Kings* ; while the substance of the last is preserved in epitome in the *Second Book of Chronicles*. Notwithstanding his immense harem, we only read of his having one son, his successor Rehoboam, the son of Naamah, a princess of Ammon. P. S.

Nor did King Solomon either live or die as his father David. A feeble attempt—perhaps justifiable—to rid himself of Jeroboam, and no more is told of him than that, at the close of a reign of forty years, he "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father." So far as we know, in that death-chamber no words of earnest, loving entreaty to serve Jehovah were spoken to his successor, such as David had uttered ; no joyous testimony here as regarded the past, nor yet strong faith and hope as concerned the future, such as had brightened the last hours of David. It is to us a silent death-chamber in which King Solomon lay. No bright sunset here, to be followed by a yet more glorious morning. He had done more than any king to denationalize Israel. And on the morrow of his death, rebellion within the land ; outside its borders, Edom and Syria ready to spring to arms, Egypt under Shishak gathering up its might ; and only a Rehoboam to hold the rudder of the State in the rising storm. A. E.

2 Chron. 9 : 29 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel
 30 forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father : and Rehoboam his son
 31 reigned in his stead.

From whatever cause, the one institution of the Jewish commonwealth which received no visible growth or encouragement during Solomon's reign, was the Prophetical order. Of Nathan, his Prophet-teacher, we hear nothing after his inauguration, except that the Prophet's two sons, Azariah and Zabud, held, as we have seen, distinguished offices in the court, and that Solomon's reign was partially recorded by Nathan. The only Prophet who takes an active part, and that quite in the close of the reign, is Ahijah of Shiloh. It is not clear whether it was through his mouth in the first instance, or through a dream, as in the earlier periods of Solomon's life, that the Divine intimation was conveyed, announcing the disruption of his kingdom and the fall of his house. But in either case, it was a significant token of the approaching calamity, that the Prophet once more, as in the time of Saul, stood opposed to the King. Stanley.

As to the inner changes of mind and heart which ran parallel with this history, Scripture is comparatively silent. Something may be learned from the books that bear his name (Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs), which stand in the Canon of the Old Testament as representing, with profound, inspired insight, the successive phases of his life ; something also from the fact that so little remains out of so much, out of the songs, proverbs, treatises of which the historian speaks. The books that remain, as has been said, represent the three stages of his life. The Song of Songs brings before us the brightness of his youth. Then comes in the Book of Proverbs, the stage of

practical, prudential thought. The poet has become the philosopher, the mystic has passed into the moralist. But the *man* passed through both stages without being permanently the better for either. They were to him but phases of his life which he had known and exhausted (Ec. 1 ; 2). And therefore there came, as in the Confessions of the Preacher, the weariness which sees written on all things, "Vanity of vanities." Slowly only could he recover from that "vexation of spirit," and lay again, with painful relapses, the foundations of a true morality. The teaching of the New Testament adds nothing to the materials for a life of Solomon, but it enables us to take the truest measure of it. The teaching of the Son of Man passes sentence on all that kingly pomp : Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field. Jesus of Nazareth was one "greater than Solomon." It was reserved for the true, the later Son of David, to fulfil the prophetic yearnings which had gathered round the birth of the earlier. He was the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace ; the true Jedidiah, the well-beloved of the Father. *Dic. B.*

Although Solomon's reign lasted forty years, he was only about sixty at his death. The promise, "I will lengthen thy days," was not fulfilled, because the condition attached to it was not kept. Never was a brighter morning of life followed by a sadder sunset. Generals of tried ability and statesmen of wide experience maintained the dignity of the crown in his early years. At his death he had no generals to lean on or to recommend his successor to ; while his counsellors were discredited by the policy which had brought the kingdom to ruin, and which, if they did not support, they were powerless to prevent. Wealth, wisdom, resources of all kinds, had blessed the commencement of his reign. Utter failure of every plan and of every hope darkened its close. Solomon received a mighty empire from his father ; he bequeathed to his son a tottering throne, a kingdom crumbling away at the extremities and assailed at the heart. The causes of this complete failure in administration are not difficult of discovery. One word sums them up in the thoughts of the historian. That word is apostasy. Cause and effect were closely joined together in Solomon's fall. Ill-treatment of his brethren preceded ; disregard of Jehovah followed. Slowly but surely the end came, apostasy from the faith and the breaking up of the kingdom. The brightness of poetic genius, with its keen love of nature's sights and sounds, as evidenced in the Song of Songs, could not

save king or kingdom. Philosophic reflection on the vanity of all things, and especially of a ceaseless round of pleasure, was equally unavailing. By failing to obey the great law of doing good to all men, he soon failed to do good to himself. But that law of the Hebrew faith could not be broken without entailing a departure, which ever grew greater, from the law of God. And so the end came to Solomon in the sorrow and in the shame of apostasy from the faith. Three centuries and a half after his death, while his greatness and his wisdom were still acknowledged, a memorial of the ruin caused by his apostasy is seen in the name given to the mount "on the east of Jerusalem," which, from his time downward, had been polluted with the worst forms of heathenism—"The Destroyer's Hill!" *Sime.*

A bright morning that promised the best thing was soon sullied ; and, if the noon is brilliant, it shines with a sickly and pretentious glare, and not with the clear, full radiance of the sunlight that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The life of Solomon, in its general aspect, as it is portrayed to us in Scripture, is sadly like that of a worldling and a voluptuary. We do not discover, indeed, that the sense of God and his claims ever wholly forsook him ; but if the good seed still grew, it was among thorns, so surrounded with "cares and pleasures of this life" as to mature no excellent fruit. Luxury and splendor blinded his eyes and hardened his heart. His domestic life became encumbered with an overgrown seraglio. The means of unlimited indulgence, love of luxury and display, had intoxicated him, and shut out God and spiritual interest from his soul. And here the direct testimony of history leaves him with all the bright auguries of his early life hidden under a dismal eclipse, and he recites as the experience of his life "vanity of vanity." *Hallam.*

He did not obey his own maxim. He ceased to rejoice with the wife of his youth ; and, loving many strangers, they drew his heart away from God. Luxury and sinful attachments made him an idolater, and idolatry made him yet more licentious ; until, in the lazy enervation and languid day-dreaming of the Sybarite, he lost the perspicacity of the sage, and the prowess of the sovereign ; and when he woke up from the swoon, he woke to find his faculties, once so clear and limpid, all perturbed, his strenuous reason paralyzed, and his healthful fancy poisoned. He woke to find the world grown hollow and himself grown old. He woke to see the sun bedarkened in Israel's sky and a

special gloom encompassing himself. He woke to recognize all round a sadder sight than winter—a blasted summer. Like a deluded Samson starting from his slumber, he felt for that noted wisdom which signalized his Nazarite days ; but its locks were shorn ; and, cross and self-disgusted, wretched and guilty, he woke up to the discovery which awaits the sated sensualist ; he found that when the beast gets the better of the man, the man is cast off by God. *Hamillon.*

Of Solomon's last days and death we know nothing. If the traditional belief, that the Book of Ecclesiastes is his confession of the vanity of his life, is correct, we are still far from knowing in what state he died. The book itself is an enigma. But whatever be the interpretation of its half melancholy, half-scornful estimate of life in general, and specially of the Preacher's own, how different is it from the fifty-first Psalm ! In his persistency in sin and in the gloominess of his repentance Solomon is utterly unlike his father. There is a calculating reflectiveness about the Preacher's recantation, as apparently also about his sins, which forms the strongest contrast to the passionate yearning with which the Psalmist flings himself and his sin before Jehovah, and leaves all to Him. This, then, is the mournful conclusion : the wisest, wealthiest, and most powerful king of the noblest nation—at that time the only noble nation—in the world, at the most glorious period of its career, writes this at the end of a long life and reign as the sum of his experiences : " All is vanity." *Plummer.*

Solomon is the man who excels more through knowledge and science than through deeply rooted piety ; the man of Proverbs more than of Psalms ; the builder of the temple indeed, but not, therefore, the devoted priest of the Lord. Is he not in this respect the type of numbers in our time, whose intellect is more fully developed than their moral being, the direction of whose life is eminently practical, but still not really in the fear of God ; who can dilate with eloquence on the idea of God, but who cannot abide the claim of personal fellowship with him ? Solomon's history shows that no intellectual gifts, however brilliant, can compensate for the want of a faithful, undivided heart. *Van O.*

Human history can present no spectacle so strange and so awful as that of a wise man making of himself a fool. Solomon did that ; and he was a wise man, even the wisest of men. If the deep sagacity of Solomon—if his keen discernment—if his strong reason—if his profound knowledge of human life and character—if even his intimate acquaintance with the law and

counsels of the Lord—did not preserve his name from that stamp of " foolishness " which we find impressed upon so many of the great names and great acts of men, who is there that can hope to stand ? Not one, as of himself ; but there is without us and above us a power that can exalt even the lowly to high things, and can sustain them in all true wisdom, so long as they rest upon it, and think not that the light which shines upon their path and glorifies their way, shines out of themselves, and not into them. Solomon was wise ; Solomon was foolish. Astonishing contradiction and contrast of terms ! Yet it does not astonish us, though it may astonish angels. We are used to this kind of experience. We see it—the same in kind, if not in degree—every day ; and that which would amaze us from any other point of view than that from which we look, becomes familiar to our thoughts. We see men who are foolish without being wise ; but we see not one who is wise without being also foolish. It is " foolishness," and not wisdom, that " is bound up in the heart of a child." Foolishness, which every man certainly has, is his nature ; wisdom, if he has it, is a gift bestowed upon him—bestowed as freely upon him as it was upon Solomon. The wisdom does not suppress or drive out the foolishness, but is a weapon—it may be a staff, it may be a glittering sword—given into his hands to fight against it, to keep it under ; a weapon to be used with daily and ever-watchful vigilance, and not to rest idly in the scabbard. This was king Solomon's fault. Having been victor in many a deadly fray, until victory became easy and habitual, he forgot that the enemy of his greatness and peace still lived—was not mortally wounded—did not even sleep. He suffered his weapon to rest until its keen edge was corroded—until it clung in rust to the scabbard, and could not be drawn forth.

If there be on earth one sight more sorrowful than that of wisdom become foolishness—or, rather, suffering foolishness to be victorious,—it is that of the fall of an old man whose youth had been promising, and whose manhood glorious and beautiful. Yet this also was the case of Solomon, and the thought of it is enough to draw forth most bitter tears. The fall of an old tree, or of some noble old ruin, is beheld with some regret, but it occasions no rending of heart. It was their doom. Age ripened them but for their fall ; and we wondered more that they stood so long, than that they fell so soon. But man is expected to ripen in moral and religious strength, to harden into rock-like fixedness as his age increases. He whom we have looked up

to so long,—he whose words were wise as oracles, and from whose lips we had so long gathered wisdom,—he who had borne noble testimonies for the truth,—he who had labored for the glory of God, who had withstood many storms of human passion and many temptations of human glory, and in whose capacious mind are garnered up the fruits of a life's knowledge and experience,—for such a man to fall from his high place fills the most firm of heart with dread, and makes the moral universe tremble. It is altogether terrible. It is a calamity to mankind; it is more than that;—it is a shame, a wrong, and a dishonor. The righteous hide their heads and the perverse exult;—hell laughs.

There is something more; the grace of God is blasphemed. To see a man set forth as one specially gifted of God—as endowed with a surpassing measure of wisdom from above, to fit him to become a king and leader of men,—for him to fall, is, with the unthinking, an awful scandal upon the gifts of God. If he who ascribes heaven-given powers to the influence of demons commits, as most suppose, the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, of what sin, think you, is he guilty, who *gives occasion* to that blasphemy by his misconduct and his fall?

Yet amid this dreadful scene of wreck and ruin something profitable to our own souls may be gathered up. It may well teach us not to rely too implicitly upon any past attainments or present convictions. The time of danger to our souls is never past, the time when the great troubler of spirits is wholly discomfited and despairs of all advantage over us. There is no time wherein we can be safe while we carry this body of sin about us. “Youth is impetuous, mid-age stubborn, old age weak,—all dangerous.” In the conviction of this ever-present peril, and of the sleepless vigilance of the enemy, may we be led to look out of ourselves altogether for strength and sustainment. When we are the strongest, it is best to be weak in ourselves; and when at our weakest, strong in him in whom we can do all things. “If God uphold us not, we cannot stand; if God uphold us, we cannot fall.” Then, why did he not uphold Solomon, that he might not fall? There can be but one answer,—Solomon did not want to be upheld. He thought he could stand alone—he relied upon his own strength—he trusted in his own heart; and we have Scripture and experience to tell us, that “he who trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” He, in the pride of his intellectual wealth, was like the rich man in the parable with his material goods,—“I am rich,

and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.” It was at that moment, when he had realized the conviction that he had need of nothing, that the word went forth against him—“Thou fool!” So also, assuredly, was it then—when Solomon thought himself perfect in wisdom, and that he had need of nothing—that the word went forth—“Thou fool!” and he became foolish indeed. *Kil.*

Concerning Solomon's Repentance.

The history says nothing of his repentance, nor, indeed, of any result produced by God's warnings and chastisements. His whole character had probably become too worldly for the heartfelt penitence of his father. But yet we have in the Book of Ecclesiastes a review of the whole experience of his life, based on the recognition of the fear of God; the review of a religious philosopher, rather than of a spiritual believer. It gives the experience of a man who has tasted every form of pleasure, and pronounces all to end in disappointment; and from this restless search after excitement—in which every supposed novelty is found to be the same thing over and over again, generation after generation, the Royal Preacher comes back to this simple result—that true life consists in the discharge of duty from religious motives: “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [life] of man.” P. S.

Did Solomon repent? Scripture says nothing positively; but it may be hoped that he did. If the Book of Ecclesiastes be correctly ascribed to Solomon—and we are of those who think that it is—it is most natural to suppose that it exhibits his maturest convictions and experiences; and although there are no such direct expressions of repentance as we find in the Psalms of David—no such lamenting cries for sin, it may be considered that the framework of the book did not well admit them. But there is much in the warnings against the vanity and vexation of spirit by which the wicked and profligate are deceived and tormented, to remind us of the sad and sorrowful experience which the history ascribes to the latter days of Solomon. *Kil.*

One reason for the hope that Solomon repented of his great sin before he died, is found in the tenor of God's promise to David in 2 S. 7: 12-16, which has special reference to Solomon. “He shall build an house for my name” (Solomon only); “If he commit iniquity” (which he did) “I will chasten him with the rod of men” (it was Solomon who wrote—“Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth,” Prov. 3: 12): “But my

mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul whom I put away from before thee." Saul was abandoned of God and never brought to repentance. God "took his mercy away from him" in that awful sense of giving him over to his righteous doom. But the Lord distinctly declares that he will not in this special sense take his mercy away from Solomon. Upon Solomon he will still hold fast and restore him to repentance—to his ultimate salvation. I do not see how the contrast between Saul and Solomon, indicated in this promise, can mean less than a pledge on the part of God to bring Solomon to repentance after his committing iniquity. Another reason is found in the Book of Ecclesiastes. This book bears ample evidence of having been written by Solomon late in his life. He is no longer a young man. He has lived long enough to have given all forms of worldly pleasure a full trial and to have proved their utter vanity. He has thought over his guilty life of pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking until he not only sees its folly but feels it. He sees that such a life is inconsistent with fearing God and keeping his commandments; and he most unequivocally declares that such fear of God and such obedience are the supreme duty of mortals. These points in this Book of Ecclesiastes afford strong proof of his real repentance—much the more strong when seen in the light of the special design of this book—viz., written for those who had admired his pleasure-loving life, and intended as his protest and warning against the very life he had lived before them which they had so much admired. The book should be taken as Solomon's testimony to the grand mistake of his life, and as the warning of a penitent man against what he then saw to have been his great life-sin. H. C.

We cannot conclude that Solomon himself did not at last repent; but this has always been considered as very doubtful, to say the least. All we know is, that Scripture has fully made known to us his falling away from God, but has said nothing of his repentance. The very silence is awful and impressive. What more melancholy than the fall of one so great—so wise? What words could have been spoken to him more powerful than his own? What eloquence could describe his fall with more feeling and beauty than his own words? What could more powerfully paint the loveliness of that holiness from which he fell? What the overpowering sweetness of that Divine love which he has consented to give up to feed on ashes? Who can describe the temptations to those very sins by which he was ensnared in a more searching manner than

he has done? How must his own sweet and Divine words sound to him like music of Paradise to the lost spirits; yea, as songs of heaven would come back to fallen angels in sad remembrance? It is very awful to think how God may use men as instruments of good that His Spirit may teach them, and through them teach others, and guide them to the living fountains of waters, yet they themselves at last fail of the prize of their high calling. What a warning for fear! I. Williams.

Influence of the Temple and Its Service Upon the Religious Life of the People.

There is another point on which all thoughtful minds will be moved to inquire—viz., the influence for good or for ill of the unsurpassed magnificence of Solomon's temple. During the twenty-nine years (the maximum) intervening between its dedication and Solomon's death, this temple stood in all its glory; the impressions made by it, then fresh and new, were in their fullest strength;—What was the result?

Under David the Mosaic Institutions had manifestly developed an immense power. The worship at the one place; the daily morning and evening sacrifice; the new moons; the great day of atonement, and the three great annual festivals—these normal seasons of public worship, enlivened and enforced by the thrilling service of sacred song—not to say, also, by the constant and devout attendance of their beloved king David, must have made the tabernacle worship a powerful agency for religious culture in Israel. It is safe to assume that these seasons of national worship were well attended during the greater part of David's reign. "The tribes went up;" the masses of the people thronged to the sacred city. The social and religious forces of their sacred institutions were in full operation, were, we may probably say, in their glory.

Under Solomon's reign the public worship at the sanctuary opened with the quickening inspirations of that mighty movement for temple-building. Immense contributions of gold, silver, treasure, the presence of materials borne laboriously from Joppa to Jerusalem and piled up there year after year, stone upon stone, as the building advanced, in growing magnificence;—these seven years of previously unknown experience among this people were crowned at length by the unsurpassed solemnity of its dedication when God came down in fire and in the visible glory of the Shechinah and took possession—all constituting an era in their

national history rarely surpassed in its interest and its promise.

As Christian philosophers, it behooves us to put and press the question : *What were the results ?* Was religion mightily revived, and were its sweet, hallowed influences for the religious culture and for the moral life of the people, powerfully sustained ? Did the magnificence of this temple take hold with transforming power upon the heart of the masses and elevate them in piety and purity ? And specially to our purpose, in view of the great national temptation of the age, Did this gorgeous temple plant itself as a breast-work of protection against idolatry ? It may be said, The problem is not before us in its simple elements, because the influence of the king and his court became so entirely adverse, and interposed so much counteraction. But why should we not reckon in the power of this temple upon king as well as upon people ? Did the magnificent temple conduce toward the piety and stability of Solomon himself ? Did it hold his court with a strong grasp to the steadfast service and worship of the God of Israel ? Did the æsthetic power of architecture, ornamentation, and magnificence, grasp the souls of either the cultured or the uncultured Hebrews, and did these elements extend their influence to the foreigners who gathered to the great city and to the royal court, so as to move them all effectively toward the true worship of Israel's God ? It was a great experiment ; it was novel—altogether untried before. What contribution does it supply to our wisdom and knowledge on these great points ?

In reply, a few things may be safely said. There is no evidence that this temple, after its dedication, improved the tone of the religious life of Israel ; in other words, that it promoted a real revival of pure religion. It is quite certain that it did not avail to counteract the various tendencies which came in powerfully upon the nation in the age of Solomon toward idolatry. It is therefore quite certain that too much may be expected of religious architecture and of the æsthetic influence of the place and surroundings of public worship. While this case of Solomon's temple may be quite too much mixed to justify the conclusion that its influence was evil rather than good ; while under all the circumstances it might be quite illogical to infer that it brought no blessings to the people ; yet surely the case must suffice to prove that these external influences are far less than omnipotent ; that too much may be expected of them, and that "the excellency of the power" that saves men from sin and builds up real holi-

ness in human souls must come more directly from God than this. H. C.

The Old Testament Discloses a Living God and a Living Religion.

It is impossible not to feel the power of the Divine Spirit which is in these older Scriptures a breath of life. The thing which is borne in upon us most strongly from almost every page of the Old Testament is—the Living God. It is not that He is so often called so ; not that there is anything like a doctrine of the personality of God, but that through all prophecy and history, through hymns and laws pulsates the Life itself. Men's thoughts of Him, their words about Him and to Him are not those of philosophers, or theologians. Often both are beautifully child-like, but we feel everywhere that to these children of His, He was very real and very near. The great critical historian Meubler, once said for himself, that the God whom he wanted was none other than the God of the Bible, the living God, "Who is heart to heart." Every religious soul, I am sure, feels just so. With the idol of the intellect, which men, in their very zeal to exalt Him above all imperfections, have often put in His place, our souls can make nothing. "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven," is nowhere truer than in our thought of God.

But a Living God, revealing himself to the religious life of men from generation to generation, means a living religion. Physical life has by some one been defined as the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations. We may apply the description to religion. If a religion should loose this power of adjustment to new conditions, it would be dead and ought to be buried. The measure of life in a religion is precisely the energy and completeness with which it fulfills the function. The religion of Israel had a strong and healthy life. Revelation, so far from being a restraint upon it, is itself the exponent of it ; the potent instrumentality through which religion adapted itself to new needs and changed surroundings, to the demands of the progress which was its own work.

A Living God and a living religion, the Old Testament gives us. What is the substance of that religion ? What do men learn to think about God ? A modern scholar has put these "thoughts of faith" very well. The Living God is the God of righteousness, righteous and loving righteousness ; the standard or the vindicator of right ; a God whom you cannot bribe nor deceive with gifts or prayers ; who will not

take religiousness for righteousness. But also the God of deliverance ; the Saviour of them who put their trust in Him ; who restores His people, being penitent. And finally, the God of history, in whose hand are men and nations, who uses them as He will, ignorant or unwilling, to accomplish in His time His purpose of judgment unto Salvation. And this God, it is not enough to know ; he will be loved. “ Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah : and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” That is the sum of religious faith and duty. *G. F. Moore.*

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AUTHORS CITED, AND KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS.

[The titles and publishers of leading works, *additional* to those given in previous volumes, are here appended to the names of authors. A helpful service in the interest of readers and writers is thus subserved.]

	William Adams, D.D.		John Bunyan.
W. F. A.	Rev. W. F. Adeney. <i>Pul. Com. Judges.</i>		George Bush, D.D. <i>Joshua and Judges.</i>
J. W. A.	Jas. W. Alexander, D.D.	N. C. B.	N. C. Burt, D.D.
W. L. A.	W. Lindsay Alexander, D.D.		Horace Bushnell, D.D.
	Bp. W. Alexander.		
	Rev. A. Ainger.		George W. Cable.
	Rev. S. R. Aldridge.		John Caird, D.D.
	Henry Alford, D.D.		Augustine Calmet, d. 1757.
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An.	Unknown Writer.		Joseph Caryl, d. 1673.
	Duke of Argyle.		A. Caspars, D.D.
	Geo. D. Armstrong, D.D.		D. Cassel, D.D.
	Thomas Arnold, D.D.		Alfred Cave, D.D.
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	C. A. Auberlen, D.D.		L. T. Chamberlain, D.D.
Aug.	Augustine.	T. C.	Thomas Chalmers, D.D.
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	C. E. Babb, D.D.		Sam'l Chandler, D.D., d. 1766.
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C. G. B.	C. G. Barth, D.D.		Stephen Charnock, D.D., d. 1680.
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	J. R. Beard, D.D.		L. Coleman, D.D.
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	Rev. Chas. Bradley.		
	Wm. I. Budington, D.D.		
B.	J. Glentworth Butler, D.D.		
W. G. B.	Wm. G. Blaikie, D.D. <i>1st and 2d Books of Samuel.</i>	B. D.	Rev. B. Dale. <i>Pul. Com. 1 Samuel.</i>
	H. Bonar, D.D.		A. D. Davidson, D.D.
	Francis Bowen.		
	Thomas Brooks, d. 1680.		

	Rev. J. T. Davidson.		Rev. F. Hastings.
	George E. Day, D.D.		Rev. C. C. Hemenway.
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	E. de Pressensé, D.D.	A. C. H.	Bp. A. C. Hervey.
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E. M. G.	E. M. Goulburn, D.D.	Kit. Enc.	Kitto's Encyclopedia.
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	Joseph Hammond, D.D.		John Lightfoot, D.D., d. 1675.
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	William Hanna, D.D.		<i>Com. 1 Kings.</i>
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Philip Pyle, D.D., d. 1799.

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Hist. Illus. O. T., etc.
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Francis Roberts., D.D., d. 1665.
Fred'k W. Robertson, D.D.
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O. Strauss.
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Pul. Com. Ruth.

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Tent Work in Palestine.
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Sermons.

H. B. T. **H. B. Tristram, D.D.**
Bible Places, etc.

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Rev. J. Waite.

Pul. Com. 1 Kings.

William Wall, D.D., d. 1727.

Robert Walker, D.D., d. 1783.
Waller.

Bp. Warburton, d. 1779.

Bp. H. W. Warren

Capt. Warren.

Pal. Expedition.

D. Waterland, D.D., d. 1740.

Edward Wells, D.D., d. 1727.

Rev. N. W. Wells.

Rev. E. White.

Bp. Sam'l Wilberforce.

Heroes of Hebrew History.

Rev. I. Williams.

Sir Chas. Wilson.

Bib. Educator.

Bp. Thos. Wilson, d. 1755.

E. C. W.

E. C. Wines, D.D.

Laws of Anc. Hebrews.

T. D. Witherspoon, D.D.

Bp. Woodford.

Theodore D. Woolsey, D.D.

Sermons.

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